

CLOSING THE BIBLE GAP IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

A THESIS-PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis-project addresses the problem of the “Worldwide Bible Gap”. The Bible Gap is normally viewed in three parts; translation, distribution, and engagement. The purpose of this project is on distribution. I have limited my scope to addressing this problem in the Global South. Research was done from a theological perspective; by literature and internet review; and from a Church history study. Then, two surveys were filled out by Church leaders from the Global South. Their insights were informative and compelling. Finally, this research was compared to research provided by the World Christian Database.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

This chapter hopes to serve as a roadmap for a journey to help solve a serious problem facing the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Approximately 2,000 years ago, Jesus commanded his disciples to “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”<sup>1</sup> While the Church has made much progress through the years, the early disciples of Jesus could not have imagined the immense challenges the church has faced these two millennia. The first twelve, and then the 120, had amazing faith as they faced the hostile world with the command from Jesus to take his Gospel to all nations.

Over the last 500 years, this task is being tackled at an accelerated pace. In the last 100 years, the Gospel has experienced explosive expansion from the Northern hemisphere to the Global South. Before defining terms such as Global South and Bible Gap, it’s necessary to state the problem this thesis-project investigates and for which it proposes solutions.

This thesis-project addresses what some refer to as the “Worldwide Bible Gap,” and what others describe as “Bible Poverty.” Translation is the focus of most current writings on this subject. It is true that the whole Bible has yet to be translated in 100 percent of the earth’s languages. In fact, there may be one billion people yet to have the

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28:19-20.

Old Testament Scriptures translated into their heart language. The major translation ministries are doing a good job of highlighting this need to the church, and providing all people on earth with a full Bible is a worthy goal. While not wanting to minimize this problem, it is not within the parameters of this thesis-project.

Currently, approximately 95 percent of the earth's population have access to a complete Bible, the New Testament, or one of the four Gospels in a language they can read and understand. This gives most people access to Scripture so that they can meet Jesus as Savior and Lord, if they so desire.

However, although Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels are translated and available, they are not getting to millions of believers and seekers who want them. A great shortage of Bibles and New Testaments exists in many parts of the world among people who can read, and who desire a copy for their spiritual nourishment. This problem seriously inhibits the spiritual growth of Christians and hinders the healthy expansion of the Church. This is especially true in the Global South. So, "The Bible Gap" describes the gap that exists between those Christians who have a Bible for their personal use, and those Christians who want a Bible or New Testament that is available already in their language, but are prevented from receiving one.

This thesis-project explores some of the reasons this problem exists and offers solutions to solve this devastating problem. It is a devastating problem because at least 500 million Christ followers are without a Bible or New Testament in the Global South.<sup>2</sup> There are many more millions of seekers, who if they had an opportunity to read or listen to God's Word, would do so, but no one is providing them this opportunity.

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<sup>2</sup> See research provided in Chapter six of this thesis-project.



There are many questions that should to be asked and will be answered as we deal with this problem. Some of these questions are:

1. Is this really a problem?
2. Do Bible Societies, Bible distribution ministries, and other Great Commission ministries agree there is a Bible Gap problem?
3. If so, what are the causes of this problem?
4. What does God think about the Bible Gap as is written in Scripture?
5. Does every professing Christian have a right to a Bible?
6. Is Bible poverty related to material poverty?
7. What can be done about the Bible Gap?
8. Do those who can do something about solving the problem want to?
9. Who holds the key? Who holds the power to change the situation?
10. What changes need to be made in how ministry is done, and how the business of ministry is conducted?
11. Can we ever solve the problem, and should we try?

### **The Context**

It is my intent to marry disciplined inquiry to present-day ministry. Therefore, it is important for you to know the ministry setting within which this theme will be addressed. Currently, I serve as a Vice President at Bible League International, whose mission is to serve the under-resourced Church in approximately 60 countries providing Bibles, biblical resources, and training, to transform lives through God's Word with the goal of

leading people to a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Since 1938, BLI has worked in over 100 countries.<sup>3</sup>

BLI has three primary programs that carry out its mission. They are Project Philip, Church Planter Training, and Bible-Based Literacy. BLI's Mission Statement tagline, "God's Word, Local Church, Global Strategy," describes how it carries out its Mission as its methods of ministry center on the use of God's Word in how the organization engages in ministry. Believing in the power of the Word of God as quoted in Isaiah, that "God's Word never returns void. It always will accomplish the intended purpose of God," BLI's goal is to get the Bible into the hands of as many people as possible.

However, BLI does not simply distribute Bibles. Rather, BLI ministers strategically engage with people in a one-on-one or small group Bible study basis. The most important venue to carry out this work is through the local church. The church is the organism and organization that Jesus is building all over the earth. It is the instrument in God's plan for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. It is with and through the local church that Christians are equipped to fulfill the call of the Great Commission. So, BLI serves the local church in each country to help them fulfill God's call to reach their nation with the Gospel. As a result, BLI's global network of church partnerships provides unparalleled opportunity for the spread of the Gospel, through the three Bible engagement programs mentioned earlier.

These programs utilize an ever-changing and adapting global strategy that of church partnerships, international logistics, and Bible tools contextualized to the places in

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on Bible League's history and ministry, see [www.bibleleague.org](http://www.bibleleague.org).

which BLI is working. This is done in six regions- Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America.

Before sharing the discovery of the Bible Gap problem, I need to go back almost twenty years to my time as a young church planting pastor. In 1988, I was planting a church in Carrollton, Texas. During this time, I became acutely aware of the persecution of house churches that was taking place in China by the government. These house churches were experiencing great revival, but due to tremendous conversion growth and persecution, they lacked Bibles. Often, a hundred or more Christians shared one Bible. It was at this time I went to China with a group of people on a short-term missions' trip with the purpose of getting as many Bibles as possible to house church Christians., and it proved to be a life-changing event. It altered my ministry, and even changed the focus for which I wanted to offer my life to God in service.

Now, this lack of access to Scripture is not a problem confined to China. I have seen it throughout Africa, other parts of Asia, and throughout Latin America. I have seen it with my own eyes on the field. I have heard the cry of new Christians for Bibles when they have none. I have talked with Christian leaders throughout the Global South about this need. Even though they often experience severe persecution and systemic poverty, when they asked, "What is your greatest need?" they almost always say, "More Bibles."

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis-project is to look at the Global South's Bible shortage problem. Why does it exist? What solutions exist that may close the gap.

## **The Parameters and Definition of Terms**

This thesis-project does not deal with global Bible Gap. Rather, its focus is on the Global South region. In recent years, much has been written about the Global South from both secular and religious perspectives, with the North-South divide often highlighted.

### **Global South**

#### **Socio-Economic**

The North-South divide is broadly considered a socio-economic and political divide.<sup>4</sup> Generally, definitions of the Global North include North America and Western Europe, with the Global South comprised of Africa, Latin America, and Asia, including the Middle East. It is important to include some additional information about this divide because certain factors, to be discussed later, exist which exasperate the Bible Gap problem.

The North mostly covers the West and the First World, along with much of the Second World. While the North may be defined as the richer, more developed region, the South may defined as the poorer, less developed region; still, additional factors differentiate the two global areas. Approximately 95 percent of the Global North has enough food and shelter.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, 95 percent of the North has a functioning education system. On the other hand, only 5 percent of the Global South population has enough

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<sup>4</sup> Mimiko Oluwafemi, *Globalization: The Politics of Global Economic Relations and International Business* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic, 2012), 47.

<sup>5</sup> Oluwafemi, *Globalization*, 47.

food and shelter. In addition, the Global South has very little political stability, and the economies are disarticulated.<sup>6</sup>

In economic terms, the North, with 25 percent of the world population, controls 80 percent of the global income. Ninety percent of the manufacturing industries are owned by, and located in, the Global North.<sup>7</sup> Inversely, the Global South has 75 percent of the world's population, but has access to only 20 percent of the global income. The South has long served the North as a source for raw materials and other commodities. The North, eager to acquire these, subjected large portions of the Global South to direct colonial rule between 1850 and 1914.<sup>8</sup> Now, as nations become economically developed, they may become part of the "North," regardless of geographical location. Other nations, which do not qualify for "developed" status, are deemed to be of the "South."<sup>9</sup>

In recent years, organizations such as The United Nations, The World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund have drawn attention to this vast economic and development gap. More recently, the north-south divide has been named the Development Continuum Gap. These international organizations are seeking to draw greater attention to closing the gap between rich and poor nations. These socio-economic conditions of the north-south divide are just some of the factors that influence the Bible Gap divide.

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<sup>6</sup> Oluwafemi, *Globalization*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Oluwafemi, *Globalization*, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Manfred Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford, 2003), 31.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Philippe Therien, "Beyond the North-South Divide: The Tale of World Poverty," *Third World Quarterly* 4: 723-742.

## Religious and Spiritual

Todd Johnson from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity states that, since the early 1900's, Christianity has experienced a major shift in the center of gravity from the North to the Southern hemisphere. Between 1900 and 2000, the number of Christians in Africa grew from 10 million to over 360 million.<sup>10</sup> Today, there are about 2 billion Christians, of whom 530 million live in Europe, 510 million live in Latin America, 390 million live in Africa, and perhaps 300 million live in Asia; those numbers are expected to change substantially in coming decades.<sup>11</sup> This same kind of exponential growth in Africa has also happened in Latin America and Asia.

Much has been written in recent years about the growth of the church in China from about 1 million in 1950 to approximately 100 million. Shortly after 1980, Christians in the Global South began to outnumber Christians in the North. Now, Christianity is a mostly non-western, non-wealthy, and non-white faith. This shift is projected to continue. Projections are that by 2035, 633 million Christians will live in Africa; 640 Million Christians will be in Latin America; 460 Million Christians will be in Asia; and the number of Christians in Europe and North America will stagnate. While this extreme growth has brought, and will bring, many blessings to the Global South, it will bring many challenges. One of these challenges is the problem of Scripture shortage.

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<sup>10</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York, NY: Oxford, 2006), 9

<sup>11</sup> Jenkins, *New Faces of Christianity*, 9.

## Bible Gap

While the Bible Gap has numerous issues, this thesis-project limits its discussion to only two parts of the overall problem. First, the Bible Gap is a Scripture access problem. The four components of Scripture accessibility are commonly referred to as translation, distribution, engagement, and transformation.

When Scripture was first given to humanity it was given in two primary languages, Hebrew and Greek. The first language of Old Testament Scripture was Hebrew. The first language of New Testament Scripture was Koine Greek.

## Translation

As time has progressed, Bible translators have labored to translate Scripture, or portions of it, into several thousand languages so that people can understand its meaning. The United Bible Societies and Wycliffe Bible Translators are two prominent international organizations active in this important work. These two organizations lead a host of smaller ministries in the work of worldwide global Scripture translation with the purpose that all people will have access to a Bible in a language they can understand.

The United Bible Societies, headquartered in London, is a worldwide association of Bible Societies with its beginning as The British and Foreign Bible Society founded in 1804. Since then, it has since grown to 146 member societies, working in over 200 countries and territories.<sup>12</sup> Their mission is “making the Bible available, known, and loved.”<sup>13</sup> The American Bible Society, the largest of the UBS network, is located in

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<sup>12</sup> “Bible Societies,” *United Bible Societies*, accessed August 10, 2017, [www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/bible-societies/](http://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/bible-societies/).

<sup>13</sup> “Bible Societies.”

Philadelphia. On their website, the UBS states that they are committed to translation, publication, and distribution of the Bible worldwide, and it holds the copyright on more Bible translations than any organization on earth. Wycliffe is the second main player in Bible translation work. The Wycliffe organization, started in 1942 as a new translation ministry, has grown to more than 100 organizations from more than 60 nations to form the Wycliffe Global Alliance.<sup>14</sup>

Given that statistics for Bible translation are always changing as new translations are completed every year, snapshots can be helpful to understand the current state of affairs. Wycliffe published their most current numbers in November 2015 on their website and are, perhaps, the most reliable. It is important to note, statistics can be difficult to understand, and easily misleading; in fact, several internet articles often made the situation sound far worse than it is.

Approximately 6,887 languages are in active use as a first language. A first language is often referred to as a “heart language,” and they are the languages on which Bible translators focus. In addition, about 200 languages exist in which there are no known first language speakers, and about 200 ‘speech varieties’ have yet to be firmly classified as distinct languages, including a variety of sign languages.<sup>15</sup> Of these nearly 7,000 languages, it is estimated that 1,778 need a translation work to be started.<sup>16</sup> This

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<sup>14</sup> “About Us,” Wycliffe Global Alliance, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.wycliffe.net/en/about-us>.

<sup>15</sup> Wycliffe, “About Us.” Further reading: see [www.ethnologue.com/about/problem-language-identification](http://www.ethnologue.com/about/problem-language-identification).

<sup>16</sup> “2015 Bible Translation Statistics” FAQ: Going Deeper. Wycliffe Global Alliance. p. 4



number of languages sounds enormous, and it is. Of 7.3 billion people on earth, it represents about 165 million people, or 2 percent.<sup>17</sup>

However, it is important not to underestimate the value of this 2 percent. These are 165 million souls that need access to the Word of God in order to be redeemed by Jesus Christ. Ministries focused on Bible translation are making great progress, and they have done a great job of educating the church about this need by such initiatives as the “Last Language Campaign.” Every year, thousands of workers are mobilized, and millions of dollars pour in, to help these ministries start new translation projects.

### Distribution

Distribution is the second part of Scripture access. After a Bible or New Testament is translated into a language people understand, it has to get into the hands of people for their use. Without a distribution process, the translated Scripture will not do anyone any good.

Less than 100 million copies of the Bible are sold or given away every year.<sup>18</sup> The World Christian Database estimates this to be 87,400,000 in 2017.<sup>19</sup> There are at least the same number of New Testaments distributed each year around the world. The Bible is available in its entirety or in part in 2,932 languages.<sup>20</sup> This accounts for Scripture being

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<sup>17</sup> “2015 Bible Translation Statistics.”

<sup>18</sup> “The Bible v the Koran: The Battle of the Books,” *The Economist*, posted December 19, 2007, accessed September 17, 2017, [www.economist.com/node/10311317/print](http://www.economist.com/node/10311317/print).

<sup>19</sup> Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database*, accessed May 2017, [www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org).

<sup>20</sup> “2015 Bible Translation Statistics.”

available to over 95 percent of the world's population. Americans purchase over 20 million Bibles every year to add to the four that the average American has at home.<sup>21</sup>

Two ministries stand out as leaders in worldwide Scripture distribution: the United Bible Society and Gideon's International. The history and global reach of United Bible Society appears above in the discussion of its role in translation. As far as distribution goes, UBS publishes an annual United Bible Societies' Scripture Distribution Report to reveal their distribution statistics. As of the writing of this chapter, the most recent report was released to the public on October 19, 2015. This report was for Scripture distributed in 2014.

UBS reports 428.2 million Scriptures distributed of which 33.9 million were full Bibles. They do not report how many of the remaining Scriptures were New Testaments, Gospels of John, and smaller Scripture portions. UBS's primary method of distribution is the sale of Scriptures from their bookstores and warehouses located in approximately 140 countries. They do give some away free, but usually after a donor has funded the project.

Many Scriptures are distributed by other ministries who purchase them from UBS and use them in their ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. As was mentioned earlier UBS holds the majority of the copyrights of Bible translations worldwide. They are the most powerful organization in the world when it comes to Scripture access.

Gideon's International, headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee is the second major player in Scripture distribution. Gideon's was founded by two businessmen in 1899. They are perhaps best known for placing Bibles in hotel rooms throughout the United States.

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<sup>21</sup> "Bible v the Koran."

However, their ministry is much more vast. Gideon's' primary activity is that of distributing Bibles and New Testaments free of charge. This is currently being done in 200 countries, territories, and possessions.<sup>22</sup> Copies are printed in the 100 most widely read languages on earth, and they are distributed free of charge in hospitals, schools, colleges, and prisons.

In addition, Gideon members distribute Bibles in one-on-one evangelistic outreach. In 2014, Gideon's International reported that more than 88 million Bibles and New Testaments were distributed, most of them being New Testaments.<sup>23</sup> A secret to Gideon's International's vast distribution efforts is found in their more than 300,000 field force. They report having 195,281 Gideon members and 105,116 Auxiliary members who regularly distribute God's Word.<sup>24</sup>

### Digital Distribution

With the advent of the internet and the digital age of cell phones and other satellite supported technology, Bible distribution has taken on a new form. In addition to the common print copies, Scripture is now digitized. It is accessible on all sorts of digital platforms, an impossible concept as little as 30 years ago. It is not unreasonable to attribute this unexpected phenomenon to a providential development orchestrated by God himself.

In 2010, Mart Green, the founder and CEO of Mardel, part of the Hobby Lobby family of companies, had the idea of pulling together the efforts of Bible Translation

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<sup>22</sup> Gideons International, accessed September 17, 2017, <https://www.gideons.org/AboutUs/WorldwideImpact.aspx>.

<sup>23</sup> Gideons International.

<sup>24</sup> Gideons International

agencies into an alliance to form a digital library of Scripture translations. This entity is called Every Tribe Every Nation, and its goal is to centralize, digitize, standardize, and finalize the Bible texts of the world. All translations will be located in one place for easy access for print, audio, and video versions of the Bible. Ministries involved in Scripture distribution and engagement can access these for free or under a manageable fee agreement.<sup>25</sup> The Digital Bible Library, supported and enabled by the Every Tribe Every Nation alliance, is built and operated by the United Bible Societies who put it at the disposal of the Alliance and other ministry partners.<sup>26</sup> The alliance includes United Bible Societies, American Bible Society, Biblica, Seed Company, SIL, and Wycliffe.

Other organizations supporting digital Bible access are Youversion, Bible Gateway, Global Media Outreach, and Faith Comes by Hearing. This is an important new development in Bible distribution and engagement. Just as the invention of the Gutenberg Press revolutionized the accessibility of the number of Bibles in print, so the access of Scripture through the internet and digital platforms will help accelerate Bible distribution and engagement to even more people.

It remains to be seen how deep the impact will be felt though, given the challenges that come with digital distribution. Just because it is available does not automatically mean people will engage. The biblical pattern of person-to-person engagement is still the most impactful. There will also always be the challenge in countries where the internet is blocked or monitored by the government. In under-resourced areas of the world where the Bible gap is greatest, people often do not have

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.digitalbiblelibrary.org/info/about>.

<sup>26</sup> United Bible Societies (<http://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org>), 2015 at <http://www.digitalbiblelibrary.org/info/dbl>.

internet or cell phone service. In areas where it is available, people are often not comfortable interacting with technology. This should improve over time, though. While this thesis-project does not focus on this aspect, it will be mentioned throughout.

## Literacy

Another challenge to the Bible Gap problem is that at least 1 billion adults cannot read. Most of these are located in the Global South. Illiteracy is a huge problem among the poor, and many Christians in the Global South cannot read or write. This keeps them disadvantaged economically and spiritually.

Christian ministries are doing much to solve the literacy problem. One example of this is Literacy and Evangelism International based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This organization was started in 1967 by an American missionary to Korea. He saw how illiteracy kept Christians from being able to read and understand the Bible. So he developed the curriculum and used it there. This led him to see the possibilities for other nations.

Their theme is “equipping the Church to share the message of Jesus Christ through the gift of reading.”<sup>27</sup> Their goal is to teach the Christian how to read the Bible and to evangelize the non-Christian. The ministry has grown to have literacy primers in 240 languages. They work through several hundred partners which are listed on their website. If the body of Christ would seize this opportunity to teach others to read, I believe it would go a long way to solve the Bible Gap and strengthen the Church.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.literacyevangelism.org>.

## Orality

In order to meet this need, God has raised up a host of ministries to answer this problem. Besides organizations teaching people how to read, write, and do simple math; others are now providing Scripture through storytelling. Stories are a part of every culture, but especially those cultures that have not been impacted by western pedagogical methods. Studies have shown that there are many people around the world, especially in the Global South, who are more comfortable learning through oral methods than literate methods. This has spawned a Christian orality movement. It is not in the parameters of this thesis to deal with this method extensively, but it is still important to note.

## Audio

Providing access to an audio Bible is another ministry that has arisen in recent years to provide Scripture for those who cannot read. The most prominent organization of this type is Faith Comes by Hearing. Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico FCBH is the leading audio Bible ministry. Its mission is “offering hope to nearly 6 billion people through Bible recordings in 921 languages.” FCBH uses mobile apps, MP3s, podcasts, and Proclaimers to provide the Word of God for people to listen to. This method is particularly effective in the Global South. Often, FCBH will partner with a ministry that focuses on the biblical text to merge the text with an audio reading into a powerful instrument of impactful learning. This not only helps Scripture distribution, but enhances engagement with Scripture, and the transformational impact of the Bible.

As noted with the previous distribution methods, the advent of audio Scripture and its impact on the Bible Gap problem is not within the parameters of this thesis-project. However, it is important to note because it is a recent development that can help solve the Bible Gap problem in the Global South.

### Bible Engagement

As we endeavor to understand the Bible Gap problem in the Global South, the third aspect of Scripture access is referred to as Bible Engagement. Bible engagement takes place when a person who has a Bible begins to read it, reflect upon it, and put its words into practice. This is the goal. If this does not take place, then Bible access has not achieved its purpose. So, it is not enough to translate the Bible into a language that people can understand; rather, it is important to ensure that those people are applying it to their lives.

It is also not enough if a Bible is available in a bookstore, warehouse, or ministry office. It must be placed into the hands of a person, and this person must be helped to understand what it says and to apply its truth to his life. When this happens, miracles occur! Only then, can a person be born again. Only then, will a person meet Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Only then, will a disciple be made and grow Christ-like character. Bible engagement leading to personal transformation is the goal of solving the Bible Gap problem.

## **Description of the Proposed Project and Ministry Context**

Bible League International is one of many great ministries around the world whose goal is to engage people with the Word of God. Though BLI does a lot of Bible distribution, its goal has always been to provide the Bible or New Testament for a person who is engaging in a Bible study in either a small group or a one-to-one study. BLI does not pass Bibles out on the street indiscriminately. Too many examples exist in which this has been done and Bibles end up in trash cans or sold on the black market. Bibles are too precious and costly to be wasted.

Forty years ago, our method of Scripture-based evangelism was formalized into a program titled “Project Philip.” It is based on the account given in Acts 8:26-38. In this story, God leads Philip to engage an Ethiopian in a study and explanation of Isaiah 53. Philip asks him a very important question, saying, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian’s response opens the door to Philip for a full-on engagement. The Ethiopian answers, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” He then invites Philip to sit with him and guide him into an understanding of what Isaiah 53 means.

Philip explains that Isaiah is speaking of Jesus, and what Jesus had done for him through his death on the cross. The story continues to show that Philip began with Isaiah 53 and probably explained other Scriptures.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Philip had to have explained water baptism to him as well, because verse 36 states that when the chariot came to a lake or river the Ethiopian asks Philip if he could be baptized?

This same method of Scripture-based evangelism is what Bible League International has used in over 100 countries for the last 40 years. It has resulted in

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<sup>28</sup> Acts 8:35.



millions of people being led to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, to be baptized, and to become connected to a local church. God's Word reveals the Living Word, Jesus Christ. This process shows that Jesus steps off the pages of His Word and reveals himself as not only the Savior of the world, but the Savior of the individual who is reading the Bible for the first time.

Another amazing thing happens in the life of a person who is engaged in a Project Philip Bible study. When a person comes to Christ in this way, he has already started developing a hunger to read God's Word. He has experienced the power of the Bible for salvation and wants to continue to engage the Bible for more spiritual food. He becomes a "Bible Christian," a true disciple. This method or process becomes his spiritual DNA. It is all he knows. These types of believers rarely fall away from the faith. They have made more than a decision. They have become a disciple of Jesus.

### Scope of the Project

Being that BLI has such a wide footprint of Scripture engagement around the world, it is an ideal ministry context for this project. This project will provide real time data from national indigenous leaders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This study will engage spiritual leaders who are recognized evangelical leaders in their respective countries, serving as the National Director for Bible League in their country. They are men and women who know the spiritual pulses of their nations. They are all very experienced in Bible engagement ministry.

This project consists of five stages:

1. Gain approval for a survey

2. Develop the survey
3. Identify participants
4. Completion of the survey by the national directors
5. Evaluate the survey results.

After surveys are gathered and analyzed, interviews with certain leaders will provide more information. Chapter five provides greater detail of the survey process.

### **Conclusion**

The Global South faces Bible distribution and engagement problem. Hundreds of millions of believers in Jesus Christ do not have a Bible or New Testament available for them. They do not own a copy for their personal spiritual growth. It is not because they do not want one; they plead for Bibles. Though most of them are very poor and survive on one or two meals a day, they do not ask for more food. They ask for more Bibles!

The problem of the Bible Gap in the Global South is too large and difficult for one person, or one organization to solve. It needs a unified collaboration of Great Commission Ministries to come together. It demands a coalition of the willing to change some of the ways we work in order to meet this need. However, if we do, we will see a great harvest of souls for the Kingdom of God. We will see an undernourished Church arise in the Global South that will finish the job that Jesus gave us, “to make disciples of all nations.” “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Matthew 24:14.

Chapter Two provides a theological framework and foundation for this project. It attempts to answer some important questions related to this problem with solid theological principles. What are the biblical themes that must be looked at in order to analyze this problem? What answers does Scripture give to the Global South?

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to provide a theological framework on which to look at the problem of the Bible Gap in the Global South, and to offer solutions for it. It is written with the presupposition that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God.

Jesus spoke in Matthew 7:24, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Jesus says that if we allow his Word to inform our thinking; and put his Word into practice; we will accomplish two objectives. First, we will be a wise person. Second, we will build our lives on a solid foundation.

#### **Definitions**

Before asking and answering the theological questions, two terms need to be defined: Scripture and Bible.

#### **Scripture**

Scripture is an English word that comes from the Latin word, *scriptura*, act of writing. Its origin also comes from the Latin word *scriptus*, to write.<sup>1</sup> Scripture is a term used often by Jesus in the Gospels. It is also used by the Apostles in their letters to speak of the written Word of God. Specifically, it is used for the Old Testament writings.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Scripture>.

## Bible

The English word “Bible” comes from the Koine Greek, *ta biblia*, meaning “the books.” It is a collection of texts sacred to Judaism and Christianity. Jews and Christians consider the Bible to be a product of divine inspiration, or an authoritative record of the relationship between God and humans.<sup>2</sup>

“Bible” also comes from the Latin word *biblia*. So, the Greek word and the Latin word are the same. The singular form of the word, *biblion* had the literal meaning of “paper” or “scroll,” and it came to be used as the ordinary word for “book.” It is the diminutive of “Byblos,” “Egyptian papyrus,” possibly so-called from the name of the Phoenician seaport Byblos from where Egyptian papyrus was exported to Greece.<sup>3</sup> The Greek *ta biblia* (lit. “little papyrus books”) was an expression Hellenistic Jews used to describe the Septuagint.<sup>4</sup> Christians continued to use these terms to describe the Old and New Testaments combined together into one book, called the Bible.

These terms are not only important for academic reasons. These terms are important for very practical reasons as well. They help answer the question of whether the Bible is important, and if the Bible is an important book, they help answer the question of whether the problem of the Bible Gap is really an important problem to solve.

Attitudes about the Bible differ among Christian groups. Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Eastern Orthodox Christians do not view the Bible in the same way that many Protestant groups do. For these groups, Church tradition is given equal standing to the importance of Scripture. On the other hand, evangelical Protestant Christians hold to

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<sup>2</sup> Steven Miller and Robert Huber, *The Bible: The Making and Impact on the Bible a History* (Oxford, UK: Lion Hudson, 2003), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, at Perseus, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Stagg, *New Testament Theology* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1962).

the view that arose from the Protestant Reformation, that Scripture is the supreme source for Christian teaching.

There is some difference among Christian groups as to the number of books found in the Bible. Originally, the Christian Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek. With the translation of the Bible into Latin, there came a separation between Western Latin-speaking Christianity and Eastern Christianity; which primarily spoke Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, and other languages.<sup>5</sup> Some Eastern Orthodox churches had as many as 81 books in their Bible, including many apocalyptic texts excluded from the Jewish canon.<sup>6</sup> Protestant churches adopted the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible as their Old Testament. This thesis-project refers to the Bible that came out of the Early Church Councils which occurred about 397 A.D., and which included the 66 books. It follows the Reformation teaching of *Sola Scriptura*, only Scripture; or, scripture alone is to determine the teaching of the church.

### **The Nature of the Word of God**

Why is Scripture, or the Bible, so important to the church? It is the Word of God! What does Scripture say about itself? What is the nature of the Word of God? What was Jesus' view of Scripture? How did the New Testament Apostles view Scripture? These questions must be answered in order to fully understand the Bible's significance for today's world.

First, let us look at the nature of the Word of God. The Word of God is larger than what is contained in Scripture. This is not to demean the Bible in any way. The Bible is

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<sup>5</sup> John Riches, *The Bible: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83.

<sup>6</sup> Riches, *Bible*, 83.

God's Word, completely authoritative. However, God's Word is more than just what has been written for us in the Bible.

For example, in Psalm 103:20, God speaks to His angel, but not everything he has said to angels is recorded in Scripture. God also speaks to the natural world (Ps. 147:15-18), but not everything he has spoken in this context is recorded. These are the same type of words He spoke to create all things (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9; Hebrews 11:3). There are also words spoken among the members of the Trinity that are not recorded in the Bible. God is the living God who speaks, and is continually speaking to exercise His Lordship over all creation.

So, although the Bible is the Word of God, the Word of God is more than the Bible. To acknowledge the broader dimensions of the Word of God is not to disparage the written Word in any way.<sup>7</sup> God's Word is the sum total of all that He has spoken; everything He has said, is saying, and will say.<sup>8</sup>

God is often referred to in the Bible as "the Living God." He always has existed and He always will exist. He has no beginning and no ending. He is also a "speaking God." He eternally communicates. Thankfully, for human beings, God desires to communicate with us. God does not speak, just to speak. God always has a purpose in His communication, and it is always to accomplish His purposes (Is 55:9-11). God rules the universe by the Word of His power. God exercises His authority and power over His creation by His Word.

God not only speaks in the Old Testament; he speaks in the New Testament Scriptures, too (Jn 1:1-14). The attribute of God speaking is so closely connected to God

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<sup>7</sup> John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 47.

<sup>8</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 48.

Himself that they are one in the same in this passage of Scripture. Jesus is called the Word, and Jesus is called God. There is even an intended connection between Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1: “In the beginning God,” and “In the beginning was the Word.” Hebrews 1:1-3 continues this theme, showing it is God’s nature to speak. His nature and desire is to reveal Himself, and the chief means he uses is to speak in terms and ways that human beings can understand. He has spoken to us by words, and he has spoken to us by the sending of his Son.

### Eternal

God’s Word is also eternal (I Peter 1:25). God’s Word stands the test of time. Since it is eternally true, it does not change. Isaiah 40:6-8 makes this point as well. Men change. Creation changes. Yet, as God is eternally unchanging, so is His Word. This fact should give us great confidence; in God, His Word, in the Scriptures, and in the Bible. Psalm 119:89 affirms this same truth: “Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.”

### Foundational

Not only is God’s Word eternal, it is also foundational for life. God’s Word is a rock-solid foundation upon which to build life. God intended for humankind to build their lives upon His Word. Jesus explains this in Luke 6:46-49. He explains that the person who hears His Word and puts it into practice is like a person who builds a house on a solid foundation. It is common practice when a builder goes to build a house, he always starts with a foundation. Then, after the foundation is cured, the rest of the house begins



to be laid upon that foundation. Otherwise, the house easily collapses when winds, rain, or storms push against the structure. In the same way, we should build our lives on the solid rock of God's Word?

### Powerful

A third element of the nature of God's Word, is not only that it is eternal and foundational, it is powerful. There is absolute and unlimited power in God's Word. We see evidence of this with God creating the heavens and all the galaxies by speaking them into existence (Psalm 33:6, 9; II Peter 3:5). God can do anything He wants when He speaks it into existence. He not only creates all things by His Word, but also sustains all things both visible and invisible by "the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3; Psalm 29:4). It is important that we understand God's Word not only as a communication of linguistic content to our minds, though it is that, but as a great power that makes things happen.<sup>9</sup> God expresses his absolute Lordship over all creation by the Word of his power. After God makes the world, he continues to govern it by his Word, as well. To say it another way, God governs providence as well as creation (Psalms 33:11; Matthew 8:26-27; II Peter 3).<sup>10</sup>

### Authoritative

A fourth element of the nature of God's Word is that it is authoritative. It carries the supreme and ultimate authority that is unique only to God. Human beings do not like authority. By nature, they do not like someone else telling them what they should do. Yet

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<sup>9</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 50.

<sup>10</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 50.

God, our creator, has every right to tell us how we should live. He does this primarily through His Word. God does nothing or says nothing, except through the prism of His love and wisdom. In His Word, He expresses His wisdom, knowledge, desires, intentions, love, and grace. That meaning is authoritative. When God shares His love with us, we have the obligation to treasure it. When He questions us, we should answer. When He expresses His grace, we are obligated to trust it. When He tells us His desires, we should conform our lives to them. When He shares with us His knowledge and intentions, we ought to believe that they are true.<sup>11</sup>

Not only is God's Word powerful and authoritative to create, sustain, and govern; but it is also powerful to save. God's saving power is expressed in grace. This was God's main intention in sending His Son. It was to save us from sin, and its effects. We see this relationship between God's Word to save and God's power to save in the parallel passages of Scripture (Genesis 18:14; Luke 1:37).

In both situations, God promises a child to be given by His supernatural means; one to Abraham and Sarah, and one to Mary. Genesis 18:14 says, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Actually, in Hebrew it literally says, "Is any word too wonderful for the Lord?" In Luke 1:37, the angel answers Mary's question with, "For with God nothing will be impossible." The literal translation should be, "No word shall be impossible with God."

This same theme of God's power to save is expressed in the preaching of the apostles. Romans 1:16, I Corinthians 1:18, I Thessalonians 1:5, and Romans 10:17 all show that the preaching of the Gospel, or the word of the Cross, not only is the correct

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<sup>11</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 56.

content to believe, but it has the power to convert a person through the act of salvation from death to life. The Word of God saves us from sin and saves us for eternity with God (II Timothy 3:15, James 1:21, I Peter 1:23).

Often, the power of God's Word is mentioned with the power of God's Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Even Jesus said in John 6:63 that His words are Spirit and life. Wherever the Word is, the Spirit is present. Wherever the Spirit is present, the Word of God is close by. The importance of the Word of God should never be underestimated or undervalued. It is of supreme importance in the life of the believer and unbeliever alike.

There are other aspects of the nature of God's Word that should be mentioned as well. These are the elements of life, light, and blessing that God's Word offers to all who listen and apply his truth. Many biblical promises offer the recipient the promise of "life." Human beings may exist and survive, but God wants his creation to have a quality of life that pulsates with an "abundant life" that he offers to those who not only hear his Word, but apply his Word to their lives (Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 8:3, 11:18; Proverbs 3:1-2, 4:4, 7:1-3; Matthew 4:4; John 10:10).

God's Word offers light to those who embrace it. This light is a form of correction and direction to all who apply its truth. There are too many perils in this life to be without the guidance and protection that God makes available to all who follow His Word (Psalm 119:105; II Timothy 3:16-17).

Finally, God offers a blessing upon those who follow the commands found in his Word. These blessings are too numerous to mention. Some include protection, success, favor, victory, increase, strength, and peace. Obedience to God and His Word always brings a blessing.

Disobedience to God and His Word will bring about disappointment, defeat, and discipline from the Lord. This principle of reaping blessing from obedience and judgement or discipline from disobedience is found throughout Scripture (I Corinthians 10:11). Grace does not negate this principle. It may blunt its force when forgiveness is sought, but it is a very serious matter to neglect God's commands, or to intentionally disobey them (Deuteronomy 30:16; Joshua 1:7-8; Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 29:18; Luke 11:27-28; James 1:22-25, and Revelation 1:3).

These important elements of the nature of God's Word stress the seriousness of the problem of the Bible Gap in the life of Christians. It is a life and death matter, spiritually, for God's children. Hosea 4:6 states, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge." God rebukes the priests of Israel because they neglected and ignored His Word. They did not, and would not, provide his Word to his people. It is a very important matter that the church provides the Word of God to the people of God. This is instrumental in providing strength and victory to the people of God.

### **Jesus' View of Scripture**

Now that we have looked at the nature of God's Word, how did Jesus view Scripture? What does Jesus think of the Bible, and its importance to us? It is important to remember that one of Jesus's names is the Word of God (John 1:1-14; Revelation 19:13). Jesus continues the verbal testimony that God began in the Old Testament Scriptures. In fact, He is a fuller expression of God's verbal testimony to himself. God reveals himself through the actions, miracles, and the personal words and teachings of Jesus. In the

gathering of his disciples, his words are the supreme criterion of discipleship (Matthew 7:24-29).<sup>12</sup> This is confirmed over and over in the New Testament.

When Jesus returns from heaven to earth, he tells us that he will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of him and his words (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). He refers to those who “hear God’s word and put it into practice” as his mother and brothers (Luke 8:21). In John 6:63, Jesus says, “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Later, the Gospel of John records that Jesus says the words he speaks are the words of the Father. He goes on to declare that on the last day it will be his words that will judge humankind (John 12:47-50).

Jesus’ words, as recorded in the New Testament, have ultimate authority, just as the words recorded in the Old Testament. They are one steady stream of divine revelation, which we call the Bible. Someone might say, “Well, I believe that Jesus’ words are the Word of God, but not everything recorded in the Old Testament is.” So, how did Jesus view the Old Testament Scriptures?

Jesus cites Old Testament passages of Scripture as authoritative words of God. The Jews of Jesus’ day commonly held the view that Old Testament Scripture was inspired by God, and they were his final authority. This is the common ground that both Jesus and the Jews held. Jesus did not hesitate to disagree with their interpretation of Scripture. However, he never questioned their understanding of scriptural authority.

Jesus referred to the Old Testament as the “Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 5:17-19, 7:12, 11:13, 22:40). This was the common Jewish view of the authority of God’s Word. Jesus also referred to the Old Testament with the term Scripture (Matthew 22:29:

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<sup>12</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 61.

Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 5:39, 7:38, 42). Again, this emphasizes the belief in the divine authority of the Old Testament held by Jesus. A third confirmation of this is the use of the term by Jesus, ‘It is written’ (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, 21:13, 24:31). Even Satan, in his response to Jesus in the desert, when Jesus referenced what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures, knew he was hearing the Word of God.

Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the Old Testament as fact. The references are numerous: Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26, 27), Abraham (John 8:56-59), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15, 11:23, 24; Luke 10:12), Lot (Luke 11:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28), the manna (John 6:31, 49, 58), the wilderness serpent (John 3:14), David (Matthew 12:3,4; Mark 12:36), Solomon (Matthew 6:29; Luke 11:31), Elijah (Luke 4:25,26), Elisha (Luke 4:27), Jonah and the fish (Matthew 12:39-41), Zechariah (Luke 11:51).<sup>13</sup>

To Christ, the Old Testament was true, authoritative, and inspired. To him, what Scripture said, God said.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, we hear the great statement that Jesus spoke as recorded in Matthew 5:17-19:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

These points are very important to keep in mind when considering the importance of the Word of God in the life of the Christian. If Jesus valued Scripture this way, his

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<sup>13</sup> John W. Wenham, *Christ & the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Wenham, *Christ & the Bible*, 37.

followers of today should do so, too. Followers of Christ should study Scripture, practice Scripture, and teach Scripture to all who will listen. If followers of Christ do not have access to the Bible, every effort must be made to provide them with God's Word. If Jesus views Scripture to be this important, he would want every one of his children to have access to a Bible in a language they can understand.

### **The Apostles' View of Scripture**

The words of the Apostles of Christ are recorded along with Jesus words in the New Testament. What was their view of the Word of God? How did they view Scripture? Was it a different view than Jesus?

#### **Old Testament Scripture**

The Apostles' view of the Old Testament does not differ from that of Jesus. The apostles use the same titles Jesus used to denote Scripture, such as "Law," "Prophets," and "Scripture." They sometimes modify these titles, as with Paul's "holy Scriptures" (II Timothy 3:15), which recalls the placing of the tablets of the covenant into the Holiest Place in the tabernacle.<sup>15</sup> James speaks of the "perfect law" (James 1:25), the "law of liberty" (James 1:25, 2:12), and the "royal law" (James 2:8). Paul also refers to Scripture as the "oracles of God" (Romans 3:2; Acts 7:38; Hebrews 5:12; I Peter 4:11).<sup>16</sup> Luke uses the term "Word of God," or "Word of the Lord," throughout the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 6:7, 12:24, 19:20). Paul also uses this same term (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 2:8-9). All of these references underscore the authority of the Old Testament.

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<sup>15</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 121.

<sup>16</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 121.

The Apostles, like Jesus, followed the pattern when they quoted Old Testament Scripture with the preface, “It is written” (Romans 1:17, 3:4; Acts 13:33). The Apostles often used the idea of God speaking and Scripture speaking interchangeably. For instance, in Galatians 3:8 it says, “The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” Just as Jesus quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures, and declared it was God speaking, so did the Apostles (Romans 9:15; I Corinthians 6:16; II Corinthians 6:2). So, for the Apostles, God and Scripture were interchangeable because to them the Scriptures were nothing less than the Word of God.<sup>17</sup>

How did the Apostles view New Testament Scripture? How do Old Testament Scriptures relate to the New Testament Church? Is Old Testament Scripture relevant for Israel and New Testament Scripture for the Church? These are very important questions to answer. Today, there seems to be confusion among Christians on these matters. Related to the Bible Gap, should we only be concerned about getting the words of Jesus into the hands of a new believer? Or should we settle for a New Testament? It could be argued that a child of God needs a full Bible; the Old and New Testaments for his spiritual nourishment.

The Apostles believed that the Old Testament was written not only for Israel in the time period of which it was written. They believed it was written for the Church in the first century in which they lived. For instance, Paul after quoting Psalm 69:9, says in Romans 15:4, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” In

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<sup>17</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 122.



another example, Paul writes to the church at Corinth reminding them of how Israel acted at times in the wilderness, and he warns the church not to practice this type of behavior: “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11). Since they were written to instruct and warn the church in the first century A.D., they are also applicable to the church in our generation as well.

Finally, in a time in which Paul knows his life on earth is coming to a close, he instructs Timothy, his young leader. In 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Paul knows he is going to have to pass on the leadership mantle to young leaders like Timothy and others. He warns Timothy that the last days will be terrible (2 Timothy 3:1). He warns him there will be false teachers in the church spreading false teaching and immorality.

What is Paul’s answer to this dilemma? How will Timothy know how to discern between good and evil? How will he know how to face these challenges? He reminds Timothy to remember Paul’s teaching, and how he lived. Yet, this is not enough. The memory of Paul and his words will gradually grow dim over time. What about other young leaders who do not know Paul as Timothy does? How will they meet the challenges of leadership in the church? There must be something more; more stable, more enduring. It is the “holy Scripture,” the written down, recorded Word of God. It is the recorded Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Raised by a Jewish mother and grandmother, Timothy has known the Scriptures since he was a young boy. Paul reminds him that they are able to make him wise, and they have led him to salvation through faith in Christ. He reminds him that they are God-breathed and are useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

Paul's answer for competent leadership for Timothy and leaders of future generations is the "holy Scriptures," the written Word of God.

Since God's words outlast heaven and earth (Matthew 24:35), they suffice for all generations of Church leadership. Paul's gives Timothy a permanent source of divine revelation that enables the church at any time to discern the truth, and identify error.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that Paul is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. For him, even apart from the New Testament, the Old Testament Scriptures were sufficient for identifying false teaching and equipping young pastors for ministry.<sup>19</sup>

The Apostle Peter had the same answer as Paul for the young leaders that he had mentored in his ministry. In his second letter, he reminds the readers that the Lord has shown him that his time on earth is coming to a close. He has the same desire as Paul to prepare them for that time when he would no longer be able to teach and guide them. In 2 Peter 2, he sounds like Paul as he reminds his readers that false prophets and teachers will bring "destructive heresies" and immoralities into the church. He knows they are going to need something enduring to rely on when he is gone.

In 2 Peter 1:16-21, Peter first appeals to his eyewitness account of the Mount of Transfiguration as Jesus was transfigured and hearing the voice of the Father commending the Son. Then, he appeals to something that is "more certain" than his subjective experience. He points them to the Old Testament Scriptures. This is what he is referring to when he says in verse 19, "we have the word of the prophets made more certain." He then emphasizes that all "prophecy of Scripture" never has its origin in the will of men, but in God (2 Peter 1:20-21).

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<sup>18</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 125.

Second Timothy 3:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:16-21 are powerful testimonies to the authority of the Old Testament as the written revelation of God. They are New Testament foundation texts that reveal a theme that pervades the entire Bible: that God rules his people by a written document. That theme begins with the stone tablets written by the finger of God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:12). In all periods of redemptive history, God calls for obedience to his written Word. The psalmists and writers of Proverbs extol it. Jesus teaches it. So, it should be no surprise that Paul and Peter, toward the end of their lives, call the churches back to the standard that has always ruled the people of God.<sup>20</sup>

### New Testament Scripture

The Old Testament Scripture were authoritative and important to Jesus and the church, but what about the New Testament? There is no one single text that teaches the authority of the New Testament as one complete document. That is, there is no text in the New Testament that speaks of the New Testament the way 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:16-21 speak of the Old Testament. This should not be surprising, though.

When the New Testament writers were writing, the collection was ongoing. It could not speak of itself as having been complete. However, there is a lot of evidence that God intended the New Testament writings to be viewed with the same importance and authority as the Old Testament. Jesus and the apostles viewed the former document as a written Word of God. They viewed it as a written record of God's covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. Is it unlikely that the final covenant God made with all humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ would not have a written record? Is the Old

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<sup>20</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 127.

Covenant more important than the New? On numerous occasions, both Jesus and the apostles made the point that the New Covenant was a fulfillment of the Old. Jesus pointed to the Old Testament Scriptures often, and he claimed they spoke of Him, and were fulfilled in Him. The apostles reiterated this point many times in their letters. Is it not likely that the greatest covenant of all, the New Covenant that God made with His people in Jesus, would have no written attestation?<sup>21</sup>

Biblical covenants are lasting arrangements between God and humankind. They have always been recorded in writing. God's covenant with Israel, given to Moses, and inscribed with God's own finger, was kept in the Holiest Place, and was to be read regularly to the people.

One of the main themes in the book of Hebrews is the comparison of the New Covenant with the Old Covenant. Hebrews 1:1 states, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets (O.T. Scripture) at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son." He continues throughout the letter comparing the Old with the New, and showing that Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets, writers, and angels.

It makes sense that if God saw fit to put the Old Testament Scriptures in writing. He would also put the New Covenant Scriptures in writing, especially since it was superior to the former. But, there is even more evidence to support this.

Jesus came as the author of the New Covenant from God. He spoke the Word of God to humanity. The accounts of Jesus speaking as no man had ever spoken before are too numerous to mention. He claimed to speak the words of the Father. The words of

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<sup>21</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 129.

Jesus, as the divine voice and as the prophet par excellence, are absolutely crucial to the believer's life (John 6:68). Jesus then chooses the apostles to remember His words (John 14:26).

The apostles, by their own oral teaching, could only remember Jesus' words for one or two generations. Without a written record of Jesus's words to the apostles, those words would be lost to us forever. A written record seems to be the only way in which generations of believers would be able to have an accurate record of his words. Without these words, there is no Christianity, and no Christian church.<sup>22</sup> Only a written document could preserve these words as God's personal words to us.

I do not want to be dogmatic about this. There is strong evidence that cultures are able to pass down teaching for multiple generations. See the discussion on Orality in chapter 1.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus directly appointed and trained the apostles as the authorized teachers of the New Covenant, and they were recognized as such by the church.<sup>24</sup> They were the eye-witnesses of the words that Jesus spoke and the miracles that Jesus did. The New Testament declares that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

After Jesus ascension to heaven, the apostles saw themselves as called, commissioned, and authorized by Jesus to offer the New Covenant to the world. They presented their preaching and teaching as the Word of God, given by Jesus through the Holy Spirit; not of human origin. Several of the apostles put their teaching into writing.

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<sup>22</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 130.

<sup>23</sup> Orality, Chapter One of this Thesis-Project.

<sup>24</sup> Wenham, *Christ & the Bible*, 110.

Was their writing less inspired than their oral witness? The writings of the prophets who spoke the Old Testament Scriptures were as authoritative as their speaking. The apostles' writings could have no less authority.<sup>25</sup>

Both Paul and Peter confirm these ideas. When Paul wrote a letter to a church, he viewed it much differently than a letter we might write to a friend. It was customary in the early church for Old Testament Scripture to be read out loud to the congregation (1 Timothy 4:13). In a similar way, it was customary for letters from an apostle to be read publicly to the church, too. In his letter to the church at Colossae, Paul instructs them to read it publicly and then pass a copy to the church of Laodicea to be read publicly (Colossians 4:16). This same practice is carried on by Paul to the church in Thessalonica. Paul commands the church to read his letter publicly to all the brethren of this church (1 Thessalonians 5:27). In fact, he states that he gives this command "before the Lord," emphasizing the importance of his command.

This practice echoes God's command to Moses to read his Word publicly to Israel. This practice continues with Joshua, Josiah, and Ezra (2 Kings 23; Nehemiah 8). Paul, and the other apostles, continue this long tradition into the New Testament church.

Not only are the apostles' letters to be read publicly to the church, they are to be obeyed. Just as Moses expected God's people to obey God's Word, so the apostle Paul expected God's people to obey his words. Why? Because he believed they were the "commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul expressed this same opinion in his letter to the Thessalonians and his letters to Timothy (2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, you may remember that they

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<sup>25</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 130.

had several prophets in the church. Paul says that the contents of his letter, his written word, took precedence over the authority of anyone in the church. Indeed, Paul said no one should be recognized as a prophet or as spiritual, unless that person recognized Paul's written word as a command of the Lord. Clearly, Paul identified his written word as the Word of God.<sup>26</sup>

Peter also believed that Paul's writings were on the same level of inspiration as the Old Testament Scriptures. In 2 Peter 3:15-16, Peter addressed his audience about Paul's letters, writing, "Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." Peter considered Paul's letters as inspired and authoritative as the Old Testament Scriptures.

Collectively, Jesus and the Apostles viewed their words as the Word of God, just as were the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, when we speak of Scripture today, we mean the collective writings of the Old and New Testaments.

As Jesus prepares the disciples for his departure to heaven, he teaches them about the role of the Holy Spirit. He taught them that the Holy Spirit would be a helper and teacher to bring to their remembrance the words that he had spoken to them. The Spirit would lead them into "all truth," and into "new truth" (John 14:26, 16:12-15). If remembrance of the Lord's words was necessary for the proper instruction of the infant church, when many eye-witnesses were still alive, how much more after they were dead.

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<sup>26</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Word*, 131.

It would be most natural to believe that the promises of remembrance and of guidance into new truth found their most far-reaching fulfillment in a New Testament Canon.<sup>27</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the shortage of Scripture available in the Global South is a very serious problem from a theological and biblical perspective. The Bible is God's written word and living word to human beings. He has provided it so that humankind, which is so easily deceived by subjective experiences, can have a record of his words and dealings with humanity. God has always wanted to provide it in written form. We see this from the earliest time when God took the initiative to write his commands on stone tablets with his own finger. God wanted to make a point!

God not only wants his Word written for humanity, he wants it communicated to humanity in such a way as to bring about his desired results. What are these results? In other words, what are God's desired purposes for providing his words to humanity?

God wants all to be saved (Matthew 1:21; John 3:16-17, John 12:47; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 1:15; 2:4; Titus 3:5; II Peter 3:9). This purpose is no more clearly communicated than in John 20:31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." The apostle Paul declares God's same desire for humanity when he writes, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). He sums up his message by declaring in verse 17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This is

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<sup>27</sup> Wenham, *Christ & the Bible*, 113.



God's highest objective and desire for us. God's Word, the Bible, is the tool he uses to bring salvation to the world.

The Bible, God's Word, is about Jesus, the Son and Savior. In fact, Jesus is the Word. Wherever you find Jesus, you find the Word. Wherever you find the Word, you find Jesus close by. The Bible is an evangelistic handbook.

A second purpose that God desires in providing his Word is for the purpose of making disciples. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "If you hold (abide, remain, continue) to my word you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." In Jesus' final words to his apostles, which we call the Great Commission, we again see this relationship between discipleship and obedience to Christ's teachings: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

How can the Church provide Christ's teachings to make disciples if people do not have access to Bibles in languages they can understand? How can a person become a healthy disciple without access to a Bible for their own spiritual growth? Unfortunately, millions of believers in Jesus Christ throughout the Global South do not own a Bible. They must rely on what a fellow Christian tells them, or they must rely on what they hear from a preacher when they attend church. In the midst of persecution and life's trials, these words are often forgotten without access to them in a personal Bible.

Every child of God deserves a Bible. It seems unlikely God would command a disciple to hold onto and obey Jesus words, if he did not intend to provide those words to his children. It is God's desire and will to provide his Word to his people. The church has

a responsibility, as his people, to do his will and provide his Word to those who desire it. The Bible is God's discipleship manual.

Finally, obedience to the Bible is evidence of our love for the Lord. When a religious leader came to Jesus and asked him what was the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied, "Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38). We often call this, "The Great Commandment." How do we express our love for God? How do we show our love? In John 14-15, Jesus says that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments: "If you love me, you will obey what I command. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who does not love Me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:15, 21, 24). Obedience to God's Word is the supreme evidence of the Christian's salvation, discipleship, and love for God.

Again, how can a person grow in the knowledge of their salvation without feeding on the Word of God? How can a person know how to follow Jesus if they do not have a Bible to show them the way? How can a person know what it means to love God, and people in a manner that pleases God without discovering it from the revelation that God has provided in the Bible?

This is why the Bible Gap in the Global South is so critical to solve. People's souls are in jeopardy. Not only is the spiritual health of individuals in the Global South affected by their relationship to God's Word, but so also is the health and vitality of the Church.

Israel, as the collective people of God prospered or declined based on their relationship to God and his commands. When they obeyed God and his Law, they prospered and lived a victorious existence. When they neglected or turned away from God's Word, they grew weak and suffered.

Take for example King Josiah (2Kings 22:8; 2 Chronicles 34:14-33). While the Temple in Jerusalem was being repaired, Hilkiah, the high priest discovered the Book of the Law. The written Word of God had been forgotten by Israel and lost as a result of the ransacking of Jerusalem. Hilkiah found it and read it to King Josiah. Josiah was pierced to the heart with fear, sorrow, and repentance. So, he called all of Israel to Jerusalem and read the Book of the Law to the people. He led the nation back to God and renewed the covenant between Israel and the Lord.

King Jehoshaphat, Nehemiah, and Ezra led similar movements back to the Word of God. In all incidents, when God's Word was given its rightful place before the people, spiritual renewal and revival occurred. God's people were blessed with favor and victory. God's enemies were defeated.

The Bible shows us this same pattern in the early Church, found in the Acts of the Apostles. There is a direct relationship between the growth of the church and access to the Word of God: "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). God's Word is living and powerful. It has a life, energy, and power all its own to create, to spread, and to accomplish the results that God desires.

If today's church will give the Word, preach the Word, teach the Word, God will cause the church to grow and spread, accomplishing the results that he intends. There is

no other method or tool like it to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus.<sup>28</sup> The apostles taught and preached the Word of God about the grace and good news of Jesus Christ. When this was faithfully done, the number of disciples grew. This is the pattern of the New Testament Church. It worked in the first century A.D. It worked in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It works in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is God's ordained method of spiritual life and power.

Since this is God's chosen method, and the Gospel is God's chosen message, the Church must take its responsibility to follow his method and proclaim his message to all people. It must make the Word of God available to all, eliminating all Bible shortages in any country. If the church is faithful and diligent to provide access and engagement of God's Word, God will bring people to himself, and his church will grow. The Church must be obedient, faithful, and diligent in this task.

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<sup>28</sup> For a further study of this method, please see Acts 8:25; 8:35; 12:24; 13:44, 46, 48-49; 15:35; 19:10, 20; 28:23, 31.

## CHAPTER 3

### CHURCH HISTORY REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Church history has a lot to teach about how to solve this problem in the Global South. This chapter breaks the past 2000 years of church history into four periods and looks at the effect that the spread of Scripture had on the Church and the world.

1. Early Christian- first 500 years
2. Middle Ages- approximately 500 A.D. through 1500 A. D.
3. Protestant Reformation Period- 1500 A.D. to 1800 A.D.
4. Modern Missions Era- 1800 A.D. to the present

#### **Early Church**

At the early part of this period, Greek was the most common language written and read. This was due to the vast impact the conquests of Alexander the Great had upon the world. At the time of the early Christian Church, even though Roman Rule covered much of the world, Rome kept Greek as the prominent language of the kingdom. Thus, the New Testament was written in Greek.

The Old Testament Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew. By the time Alexander died, in 323 B.C., the world had become bilingual, and Greek was the second language everyone used. Around the year 285 B.C., Demetrius of Phalerum was custodian of a world-famous library in Alexandria, Egypt. Many Jews were living in Egypt, so Demetrius asked King Ptolemy Philadelphus if he would arrange to have a

Greek translation of the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament) made for the library.

The high priest of Jerusalem chose six scholars from each of the twelve tribes of Israel to undertake this task. There is a slight difference of opinion whether there were 70 or 72 who worked on it. Nevertheless, they completed the task on the island of Pharos. For those Jews who could not read Hebrew, the Greek translation was a great gift to them. The Greek word for “seventy” is Septuagint, thus the name for this translation of Scripture became known as the Septuagint. Over the course of the next two centuries, the other books of the Hebrew Old Testament were translated into Greek as well.

### Septuagint

The influence of the Septuagint was enormous. During the intertestamental period, persecution of the Jews scattered them throughout the Roman Empire. Many of them could not read Hebrew, but most could read Greek. So, this translation met a great need by providing a translation of the Scripture in a language that most everyone could read. It was even used by the apostles of the Early Church. It was the Bible of its day.<sup>1</sup>

The Christians read the Bible (Old Testament Scriptures) in Greek, unless they knew how to read Hebrew. Many may have read it in both languages. The apostles wrote the four Gospels in Greek. The apostles also wrote their letters to the churches in Greek because this was the language throughout the Roman world that all could understand.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Kenneth Connolly, *The Indestructible Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 17.

## Vulgate

By the fourth century, Latin became the language of communication for both the church and the Empire. During the last half of this century, Jerome translated the New Testament from Greek to Latin, and the Old Testament from Hebrew to Latin. It became the favorite translation of the day. Scholars, such as Augustine, accepted it, and soon it was introduced into all the churches of the West.<sup>2</sup>

Jerome's Bible became known as the "Vulgate," or Bible "in the common language," but it turned out to be the very instrument which blocked the road to any other common language Bible. It was so highly esteemed that succeeding generations decided to forbid anyone from making another translation. Latin became the official language of the Roman Catholic priests, whatever their mother tongue was.

With the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, Latin began to disappear as the common language, and access to the Word of God began to disappear. As the Scriptures became inaccessible to people, spiritual darkness fell over the world. Truth became absent because God's revelation became rare, demonstrating a spiritual principle that as Scripture accessibility goes, so goes the light and revelation of the Gospel. Spiritual darkness fills the void. Thus, even historians call the Middle Ages, "The Dark Ages."

## Middle Ages

The Middle Ages, or sometimes referred to as the Dark Ages or the Medieval period, was a difficult time in human history. It lasted from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>2</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 48.

beginning with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and merging into the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery.<sup>3</sup> The Middle Ages is the middle period of the three traditional divisions of Western history: classical antiquity, the medieval period, and the modern period.

It is not the intent of this thesis-project to do an exhaustive study of these historical periods. However, lessons can be learned from history that show the impact of the accessibility or inaccessibility of Scripture. How did this topic impact the growth of the Christian faith both for individuals and the Church at large? And, if it had an effect? Will it have a similar effect upon the growth of Christianity today?

### Spiritual Decline

It is common knowledge that the Early Church, after Jesus' Ascension, was a church on fire with the Holy Spirit and devoted to evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Even though the church suffered much persecution, the faith of Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire. This same pattern continued for the next two to three centuries. Gradually, this early expansion and miraculous spiritual life dwindled. When Constantine made Christianity the preferred religion, it seems that the Church lost sight of Jesus' call to make disciples of all nations. The white-hot spiritual temperature for evangelism and church growth cooled. The Church went into retreat and eventual decline.

The Middle Ages was a period of spiritual decline and spiritual darkness. Some historians even call it "The Dark Ages." At the same time, as invading armies swept into

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Power, *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 304.



the Roman Empire from the North and the East (Islamic), the Empire broke apart, and Christians often went in to hiding.

### Monasteries

Monasteries were founded as a way to preserve the study of Scripture (Vulgate). They were the main, and sometimes only, outposts of education and literacy in a region. Many of the surviving manuscripts of the Latin classics were hand-copied in monasteries, including the Bible.<sup>4</sup> The most important service performed by monasteries was in the study and copying of Scripture. They kept the Word of God alive, and monasteries were bright centers in a dark world.<sup>5</sup>

### Illiteracy

As time went on, the knowledge of Greek and Latin was lost to the masses. Illiteracy among the masses was high. The monks and priests were the only people who could read the Bible and understand it. To make matters worse, the excessive opulence and authoritarian leadership of the priests and bishops led the church away from piety and moral integrity.<sup>6</sup> Biblical illiteracy became widespread.

### Superstition

To make matters even worse, Church leaders decided that the Bible should not be translated into the vernacular languages of the people. Even though the original Latin that

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<sup>4</sup> Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000*. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2009), 185.

<sup>5</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 50.

the Vulgate was translated in had changed over time, the Church insisted that the Latin translation of the Vulgate had a special inspiration above any other language. With ignorance of the Bible came superstition. Witches, wizards, and astrologers had a fantastic trade, while fantastic and unbiblical stories were incredulously believed.<sup>7</sup> With this, also came a rise in the authority of the papacy. Without the authority of God's Word, and the availability of Scripture to guide the Church and individual Christians, the authority of man rose in prominence to govern the Church of Jesus Christ.

### Renaissance

This general pattern continued for several hundred years during the Middle Ages. However, something began to happen towards the end of the 12th century that would eventually bring the world out of this dark period. It was called the Renaissance. The Renaissance was a period of many changes at the outset of the High Middle Ages. It included social, political, and economic transformations, and an intellectual revitalization of Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> Historian, Charles Haskins writes,

The 12<sup>th</sup> century in Europe was in many respects an age of fresh and vigorous life. It saw the culmination of Romanesque art and the beginnings of Gothic; the emergence of the vernacular literatures; the revival of the Latin classics, of Latin poetry and Roman law; the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much Greek philosophy; and the origin of the first European universities.<sup>9</sup>

This thirst for learning created a deep desire to rediscover the ancient Greek works of natural science, philosophy and mathematics. It also created a new movement of

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<sup>7</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Wise Bauer, *The History of the Renaissance World: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Conquest of Constantinople* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), vii.

the translation of texts from antiquity. Unfortunately, this same movement for translation was resisted by the Church. Church leadership not only discouraged the populace from reading the Bible on their own, but also established Church decrees forbidding the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages.

In 1199 A.D, Pope Innocent III outlawed all versions of the Bible, except for the Vulgate. Pope Innocent III is quoted,

To be reprov'd are those who translate into French the Gospels, the letters of Paul, the psalter, etc. The mysteries of the faith are not to be explained rashly to anyone. Usually in fact, they cannot be understood by everyone but only by those who are qualified to understand them with informed intelligence. The depth of the divine Scriptures is such that not only the illiterate and uninitiated have difficulty understanding them, but also the educated and the gifted.<sup>10</sup>

In 1215, Pope Innocent III, also stated that those who translate the Scriptures into common vernacular languages should be seized for trial: “They shall be seized for trial and penalties, who engage in the translation of the sacred volumes, or who hold secret conventicles, or who assume the office of preaching without the authority of their superiors.”<sup>11</sup> In 1229, a Decree at the Council of Toulouse was made to enforce these practices of the Church. “We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; but we mostly strictly forbid their having any translation of these books”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> “Bible Availability During the Middle Ages,” *Puritan Board*, posted January 22, 2010, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.puritanboard.com/showthread.php/57928-Bible-availability-during-middle-ages>.

<sup>11</sup> “Bible Availability.”

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Starr, “Why Christians Were Denied Access to Their Bible for 1000 Years,” updated July 20, 2013, accessed November 12, 2017, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernard-starr/why-christians-were-denied-access-to-their-bible-for-1000-years\\_b\\_3303545.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bernard-starr/why-christians-were-denied-access-to-their-bible-for-1000-years_b_3303545.html).

## Waldenses

Yet, nothing the Church leadership did could quench the longing in the hearts of true believers for the Word of God. An example of this is the Frenchman, Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant who lived in Lyons. In 1173, following a deep religious experience, he determined to distribute his wealth to the poor, keeping only sufficient funds for his family's survival. Others followed him and they were called the Waldenses.<sup>13</sup> The chief tenet of their faith was that the Bible was their supreme authority. Peter Waldo had the Latin New Testament translated into the vernacular. Their faith was orthodox. They believed in the divinity of Jesus, and salvation solely through Christ. Evangelism was the heartbeat of their faith.<sup>14</sup>

This same Pope Innocent III initiated a campaign against them in 1206. A camp of 180 persons was found, and rather than recant their faith and practice, they were burned alive. Over time, tens of thousands of new Bible-reading Christians were imprisoned, hung, or burned alive for reading the Bible in a language they could understand.

## John Wycliffe

As the darkness of the Middle Ages gradually began to dissipate, this new thirst for biblical truth grew. It was time for it to spread to England. John Wycliffe, a forerunner to the Reformation Period, came on the scene.

John Wycliffe was born in England about 1330 A.D. He became a student at Oxford University and studied, as well as taught there, for most of his adult life.

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<sup>13</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 65.

<sup>14</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 65.

Eventually, Wycliffe became the leading philosopher and theologian of the university. While he was a student at the university in 1347, the Black Death spread throughout Europe, and lasted 3 years. It was so devastating that about 35 million people died, one-third of the population. It was during this plague, Wycliffe experienced a profound spiritual revival that transformed his life.<sup>15</sup>

Time does not permit to describe in detail the horrible corruption both in the Church and politics of his day in England. However, it was this corruption, and the marriage of church leadership with political leadership that provoked him to speak out and to write. It was not until the last eight or nine years of his life that Wycliffe engaged in the writing for which he would become famous.<sup>16</sup>

He wrote many treatises and booklets concerning Papal and priest corruption, civil governance, and Church doctrine. In 1378, he wrote *The Truth of Holy Scripture* in which he made clear his view of the Bible. He stated that the Scriptures are without error and contain God's entire revelation. No further teaching from any other source is necessary, and all other teaching must be tested against the Bible.<sup>17</sup>

In Wycliffe's writings, we see all the seeds of the Reformation. For nearly every issue on which he wrote, godly men were burned at the stake 150 years later. He held that Scripture comes "from the mouth of God." It is the truth, superior to the teaching of the Pope, the Church or the Fathers, and tells us all we need to know. Wycliffe set the table and wrote the menu for the great reform that was to shake Europe to its root.<sup>18</sup> Yet, his

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<sup>15</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1953), 663.

<sup>17</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 74.

greatest contribution was yet to come: a complete Bible in the language of the ordinary English man and woman.

Dr. Wycliffe, through his sermons, lectures, and writings, had built a following of disciples, the Lollards, who helped him in this most significant task. He believed ordinary laymen could understand the Bible and needed no interpretation from professional clergy. The problem was that most British could not read Latin, and the Bible had to be translated into English.

### Lollards

Wycliffe's Bible was not a translation from the original languages. The Greek and Hebrew manuscripts had not been discovered. These would be available in the Providence of God about 100 years later. However, Wycliffe and his followers were good Latin scholars. Thus, Wycliffe's translation was an English translation from the Latin Vulgate.

Even though their actions of translating the Bible in the common language of the people would eventually lead to the penalty of death by burning, they started a Bible movement in England that became impossible to stop. This was enhanced by Wycliffe sending out itinerant preachers who stressed the exposition of passages from the Bible.<sup>19</sup> They impacted not only England, but other parts of Europe.

By the time of Wycliffe's death in 1384, the Lollards looked upon themselves as a church, dependent on the Bible, and independent of Rome. They accepted the priesthood of believers and the administration of the sacraments by men who had not been ordained

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<sup>19</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 665.

by a bishop. They spread out all over England, taking their Bibles with them and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the language of the people.<sup>20</sup>

These new ideas, that of the Bible being the final authority of truth, not the Pope or Church tradition; and the provision of the Scriptures being made available in the vernacular languages of the common people spread from England into Germany, France, and the Czech Republic.

The impact of the Renaissance had an even greater effect upon Western Civilization in the later part of the Middle Ages. Though it started in the 12th century, the Renaissance burst forth in the early 1400's, bringing greater change. Renaissance means "new birth," as though during the Middle Ages Europe had been dead and had now become alive again.<sup>21</sup> It was not quite that dramatic a change, but this time period did bring some astounding changes to the world.

During this period, cataclysmic social, intellectual, and religious changes occurred that would forever change the world. Along with discoveries in geography and astronomy, this made possible with the mariner's compass and other instruments, there was a strong enthusiasm for the pre-Christian literature of Greece and Rome. With this, it also brought a new desire to study the Greek language.

Another significant geo-political event occurred in 1453. It was the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. At its fall, the Greek scholars fled from Constantinople to the West, taking their scholarship with them. This mixing of eastern and western scholarship brought about an even stronger renaissance of learning. This event brought many Greek Christian works, including the Greek New Testament

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<sup>20</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 665.

<sup>21</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 604.

manuscripts from the East to Western Europe. Western scholars, such as Erasmus, began to study the Greek New Testament manuscripts for the first time since late antiquity.<sup>22</sup> This new accessibility to the Bible in the original languages of Greek and Hebrew paved the way for the Reformation.

In addition to this, Renaissance writers began translating their non-religious classical works into the vernacular languages of their day. Combined with the introduction of printing, this allowed many more people access to books, especially the Bible.<sup>23</sup> The practice of translating the Bible into the common languages of Europe changed Europe and eventually the whole world with the message of Jesus Christ.

### Humanism

With the development of the Renaissance came a philosophy known as humanism. Humanism had both a negative and positive effect on society. Humanism had in it at the beginning, two streams. During the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and into the Reformation period, humanism influenced both religious and secular life.

The term “humanism” has a number of meanings. Each meaning of the word constitutes a different type of humanism. For instance, Renaissance Humanism is defined as the spirit of learning that developed at the end of the Middle Ages with the revival of classical letters and a renewed confidence in the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Open University, “Looking at the Renaissance: Religious Context in the Renaissance,” *Open University*, accessed November 11, 2017, <http://fass.open.ac.uk>.

<sup>23</sup> “Looking at the Renaissance.”

<sup>24</sup> Fred Edwards, *What Is Humanism* (Washington, D.C.: American Humanist Association. 2008), 1.



There were Christian humanists, and there were Secular humanists. Christian humanists of their day held to their faith in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures as the Word of God. There was another stream of humanists during this period that can be defined as how we would define Modern Humanism today. It is a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all supernaturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion.<sup>25</sup> This type of humanism thought of man as the competent architect of his own future. While paying lip service to the Christian faith, they tended to rule out God, the need for redemption, and the incarnation, and to ignore life beyond the grave. Often, they abused Christian morality.<sup>26</sup>

There were some outstanding Christian humanists during this time who embraced the value of human beings made in the image of God and God's love for humanity. They saw in the Scriptures that God made man in his image, and that he loved humankind so much that he was willing to send his only Son to redeem humankind from sin and condemnation. This aspect of the value of a human soul was embraced by the Christian humanists of the Renaissance.

One such humanist was a Frenchman named Jacques Lefevre d'Etaples (1455-1536). He was a priest who studied and taught at the University of Paris. He devoted much of his time to biblical studies, and translated the Bible from Latin to French so that the common man could read the Bible for themselves. He pled for a return to primitive Christianity and for the Scriptures as the primary authority for Christians.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Edwards, *What Is Humanism*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 605.

<sup>27</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 660.

## Erasmus

There were others of note, such as Roelof Huysmann and Johann Reuchlin of Germany. Masters of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew they went behind the Vulgate to dig into first-hand sources to study the Bible, and often pointed out errors in the Vulgate. But, none was as important as Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536).

Erasmus studied Greek at the University of Paris and at Oxford, and he became extremely proficient in the language. He was already a master of Latin. Erasmus wanted to see the Church reformed. He wanted it purged of superstition and immorality. He owed much of his popularity to his writings. This was facilitated by the advent of the printing press.

One of his most widely read books was *Manual of the Christian Soldier*. He pointed out that much of the current teaching and ceremony in the Church was irrelevant. Writings such as this fed the future reform movement. William Tyndale, who was born the year Erasmus died, had Erasmus' manuscript translated into English, and then printed and circulated.<sup>28</sup>

In 1505, Erasmus wrote a satire entitled, *In Praise of Folly*, in which he portrayed kings, bishops, princes and popes in bondage to Folly. However, his greatest work was his edition of the Greek New Testament which appeared in 1516. For this work, Erasmus collected the Greek documents of antiquity that were available at this time for the entire New Testament. He compiled them and printed them, with a Latin translation of 672 pages.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 90.

<sup>29</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 90.

This was the first time the New Testament was made available to the general public in its original language. About 3,300 copies were printed of the first two editions. Erasmus's edition formed the basis of the vernacular translations of the New Testament for much of Europe. Zwingli and Calvin used it to give their people a Bible. Luther did the same for Germany, and Tyndale for England. The fourth and fifth editions of 1527 and 1536 were used in the King James Version.<sup>30</sup> Erasmus probably had no idea that his Greek edition would have such a world-changing effect. He did say though, "He laid the egg which Luther hatched."<sup>31</sup>

### The Gutenberg Printing Press

There was one final change that the Renaissance of the Middle Ages brought to the world. It was the most important invention of the second millennium.<sup>32</sup> It was Gutenberg's movable type printing.

Johannes Gutenberg's work in the printing press began about 1436. Before this, most printing was done with woodblock printing. It was not moveable, and much slower. Having worked as a professional goldsmith, Gutenberg made skillful use of the knowledge of metals he had learned as a craftsman.<sup>33</sup> Gutenberg was also the first to make his type from an alloy of lead, tin, and antimony, known as type metal, or printer's metal.

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<sup>30</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 91.

<sup>31</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 91.

<sup>32</sup> In 1997, *Time Life* magazine picked Gutenberg's invention to be the most important of the second millennium. The magazine did not devote a cover to this. It was a corporate decision. See [www.booksdreams.eu/online/www/content/508/510/ENG/index.html](http://www.booksdreams.eu/online/www/content/508/510/ENG/index.html).

<sup>33</sup> Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: from Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 15-23, 61-73.

This was critical for producing durable type that produced high-quality printed books.<sup>34</sup>

This led to the printing of *The Gutenberg Bible* in 1455.

The invention of the printing press revolutionized communication and book production, leading to the spread of knowledge. Rapidly, printing spread from Germany to all Europe, and eventually the world. A printing press was built in Venice in 1469, and by 1500, the city had 417 printers.<sup>35</sup> This type of printing spread to Paris by 1470, and to England by 1476. By the early 1500's, a printer set up shop in Wittenberg, Luther's city. Mr. Lufft produced more than 100,000 Bibles from this print shop. Because the paper of that time contained no wood, the pages have remained white to this day, and the gold of the illuminated initials has lost none of its splendor.<sup>36</sup>

These cultural and technological factors of the Renaissance period in the Middle Ages prepared the world for a new period of world history called the Protestant Reformation. These factors made possible the widespread ownership of copies of the Bible. This opened the way for private, individual study to supplement public reading in the congregation. For many more Christians, private, rather than public, reading became the most potent form of encounter with Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

### **Protestant Reformation**

These factors ushered in a period called the Protestant Reformation. When the Reformation started, the Church was split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the

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<sup>34</sup> Briggs and Burke, *Social History*.

<sup>35</sup> Briggs and Burke, *Social History*.

<sup>36</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 89.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 41.

Western Roman Catholic Church. Both Churches placed a value upon the Bible, but they did not place its importance above Church tradition to determine doctrine and practice. The Bible was held very tightly by the clergy and was kept away from laymen, except when it could be interpreted by the clergy to laymen. The practice introduced many fallacious teachings and doctrines to the Church. Unfortunately, the Church fell into many practices of immorality, worldliness, and extravagance by the priests, bishops, and popes.

The Protestant Reformation rose out of the Roman Catholic Church. It did not have much effect upon the Eastern Orthodox Church. Most of the early leaders of the Reformation were Catholic priests and monks. As has already been mentioned, the Reformation came about because of a number of factors that took place in the 1400's. These factors created a strong desire for knowledge and truth among many priests.

### Martin Luther

Martin Luther is usually, and rightly, regarded as the chief pioneer of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>38</sup> Luther was a Roman Catholic born in Germany in 1483. By age 22, he had earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Erfurt. During a storm, while huddled under a tree, the tree was suddenly struck by lightning. Luther was so shaken by this incident, he soon entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.<sup>39</sup> A year later, he became a monk, hoping that the extreme discipline and study of a monk would bring him assurance of salvation. He was disappointed because it never did.

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<sup>38</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 703.

<sup>39</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 96.

In 1511, Luther was transferred to the monastery at Wittenberg where, the next year, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology and became a professor of biblical literature.<sup>40</sup> He visited Rome on business for his order, and what he saw there of the carelessness and corruption of the clergy distressed him.<sup>41</sup> In 1517, John Tetzel was in Wittenberg selling papal indulgences in order to raise money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica. Indulgences were written promises guaranteeing reduced time in purgatory in return for sums of money. Luther strongly disagreed with the practice and publicly disputed it.

At the same time, he was lecturing on the book of Romans. When he came to Paul's words in Romans 1:17, "the just shall live by faith," Luther suddenly understood Paul's teaching of "imputed righteousness." Luther's entire theological framework was shattered. He now saw that a man "in Christ" may have the righteousness of God transferred to his credit "through faith," and that understanding brought about his great conversion experience.<sup>42</sup>

The light of God's Word had suddenly broken in upon Luther's heart, as the lightning bolt had twelve years earlier. Luther finally found what his heart had been searching for: the forgiveness of sin, and the assurance of a right relationship with God. Luther's relationship to the Bible would forever be changed, and this was the beginning of a revival that would sweep through the Church, and throughout Western Europe, eventually changing the whole world.

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<sup>40</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 96.

<sup>41</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 705.

<sup>42</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 96.

Time does not permit to detail all of the significant events of Luther's life. However, it's important to note that it was the revelation of God's Word that changed a very normal person of his day into an extra-ordinary person that would change the course of history. Now, it is time to pick up at the most significant event of Luther's life.

Luther is most known for, and given credit for, beginning the Reformation when he nailed the *Ninety-Five Theses* on the Castle church door in Wittenberg in 1517. This act brought him to the point of no return in his opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. Soon afterwards, an order was issued for his arrest. This followed him until the day he died. In April of 1521, Luther was called before the Assembly of Worms, where he was accused of forty-one errors of doctrine and given sixty days to recant. It is here, that Martin Luther is said to have made his famous statement: "Here I stand. I can do no other... my conscience is captive to the Word of God."

Emperor Charles began to move against him, declaring that Luther "was a limb cut off from the Church of God, an obstinate schismatic and manifest heretic."<sup>43</sup> He also commanded everyone in Germany to refuse Luther hospitality, lodging, food or drink. They were to do the same to Luther's friends, and even confiscate their property. The decree also prohibited the printing, buying, or selling of Luther's books and pamphlets.<sup>44</sup>

On May 4, 1521, he was captured while returning home by a group of people who appeared to be criminals and taken as a hostage to the Wartburg Castle. It was then that he found out that his captors were actually his friends. They were commissioned by Frederick, the prince of Saxony, who was a friend of Luther to do this for his

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<sup>43</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 718.

<sup>44</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 718.

protection.<sup>45</sup> Luther's identity was concealed even from those who lived in the castle. He was known only as "Knight George." For the next ten months, he lived in near solitude away from friends, and without much human contact, so that it would not be discovered that "Knight George" was actually Martin Luther. But, under the sovereignty of God, this time became his greatest season of accomplishment.

It was during this ten month period that Luther wrote almost a dozen books and translated the entire New Testament from Greek into German.<sup>46</sup> He used Erasmus' second edition (1519) as his primary source.<sup>47</sup> He endeavored to make the apostles and prophets speak to the Germans as though they had been natives of the country. His version became the cherished possession of the nation and did much to standardize the literary language.<sup>48</sup>

### Bible Translation

After leaving the castle, Luther started on his translation of the Old Testament which took an additional ten years. Though well-taught in Greek and Hebrew, he did not attempt it alone. "Translators must never work by themselves. When one is alone, the best and most suitable words do not always occur to him."<sup>49</sup> So, Luther formed a translation committee, which he dubbed his "Sanhedrin." It was composed of such

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<sup>45</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 97.

<sup>46</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 719.

<sup>47</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 98.

<sup>48</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 719.

<sup>49</sup> Henry Zecher, "The Bible Translation that Rocked the World," accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-34/bible-translation-that-rocked-world.html>.



scholars as Philipp Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, John Bugenhagen, and Caspar Cruciger.<sup>50</sup> However, Luther remained the chief translator.

It was not enough though for his translation to be accurate in written form. Luther wanted his German translation to also sound right. “I try to speak as men do in the market place. In rendering Moses, I make him so German that no one would suspect he was a Jew.”<sup>51</sup> Luther was a perfectionist. Sometimes, he would take a whole month just to decide on a single word. Germans everywhere bought Luther’s Bible. It was the “must” book to have in their homes. It was likely to be one of the few books at that time they could afford.<sup>52</sup> During the following fourteen years, Luther’s Bible went through 377 editions.

Luther’s influence on all of Europe is just too wide to cover in this thesis-project. However, it was his emphasis on the Bible, and insistence that all Christians read the Bible, that spread throughout not only Germany, but all of Europe. Luther’s German Bible had a direct influence upon subsequent translations of the Bible in Holland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, and England. This went hand-in-hand with the teaching of the priesthood of all believers, and that believers were competent to understand the Scriptures by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Luther’s ministry epitomizes the power and impact of the Word of God upon his generation. From translation, to access (distribution), to engagement, to the transformation of people’s lives who read the Scriptures. The Bible fueled the Reformation, the revival of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>50</sup> Zecher, “Bible Translation.”

<sup>51</sup> Zecher, “Bible Translation.”

<sup>52</sup> Zecher, “Bible Translation.”

## Reformed Movement

Parallel with Lutheranism, another kind of Protestantism emerged. It goes by the name of Reformed. In it were varieties, including Presbyterianism and several others. Luther had an effect upon it, but in its origin, humanism was more influential than was Luther.<sup>53</sup> No single leader placed so profound a stamp upon the Reformed movement, as Luther did upon Lutheranism.

However, there were three men who were very influential in forming what are called the Reformed churches. The two chief early figures, Zwingli and Calvin were more influenced by humanism than was Luther. As has been mentioned earlier, the early humanism of the Renaissance revived a desire to look back at the pre-Christian Greco-Roman tradition. There was a desire, similar to that of Erasmus, to go back to study the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and Septuagint, and the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. The Reformed movement insisted that every practice and doctrine be subject to the test of whether they could be supported from Scripture.<sup>54</sup>

The movements which produced the Reformed Churches arose almost simultaneously, with those which had come through Luther. They were very aware of Luther, but went further away from Roman Catholicism than Luther's movement did.

## Huldreich Zwingli

The earliest outstanding leader of the Reformed Movement was Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531). Zwingli was born only a few weeks after Luther. He was his contemporary, but only met Luther once from what is known about him. He was born in

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<sup>53</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 745.

<sup>54</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 746.

Switzerland, and made his home in Zurich. During his student days, he acquired Latin and Greek, and read the Latin and Greek Fathers. Like Luther, he drank from the well of the Early Church Father, Augustine. The writings of Christian humanists, such as Pico della Mirandola and Erasmus, appealed to him. Their passion was to go back to the practices of the Early Church and the study of the Greek New Testament. This inspired him to memorize much of the Greek New Testament.<sup>55</sup>

In 1529, there was an effort to consolidate the two German reform movements. As a result, Luther and Zwingli met for three days in Marburg. In this meeting, the *Articles of Marburg* were drawn up. There were fourteen doctrines that the two men agreed upon. However, the fifteenth, dealing with the Lord's Supper, they could not agree upon. The issue was over Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation, that is, the view that Christ is literally present in the bread and wine. Zwingli believed that since Christ's body ascended to heaven, it could not be present in the bread.<sup>56</sup>

Time does not permit to delve into more details of Zwingli's meeting with Luther. The most significant result that came out of this meeting was the establishment of the Bible as the sole and final authority for all disputes. This, Luther and Zwingli, and all Reformation leaders would agree on. It was the final authority.

In 1529, Zwingli led a team of scholars to create a translation called the Zurich Bible. It was a translation from the Hebrew and Greek into the Swiss-German language. This Bible came five years before Luther completed his Bible for Germany.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 747.

<sup>56</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 102.

<sup>57</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 102.

## John Calvin

Born in 1509, John Calvin was the most influential leader of the Reformed Movement. Calvin was brilliant. At age fourteen, he entered the University of Paris, the most prestigious university in the world of that day. Available details of his conversion only show that he was serious about his faith from a relatively young age. At age nineteen, he left Paris to study law. He wrote in Latin. He learned Greek and Hebrew, and studied the Scriptures in these languages. It is clear that he had come under the influence of a group of Protestants in Paris. It is also probable that he became acquainted with some writings of Erasmus and Luther.<sup>58</sup>

At age twenty-six, Calvin finished, and had published, his first edition of the most influential book ever written on Systematic Theology, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*. For the next 24 years, he put it through numerous edits for his final revision in 1559.<sup>59</sup>

Like Luther, he went back to Augustine and the Church Fathers, as well as the Scriptures themselves, to formulate his ideas. In his work, was a comprehensive statement of what Calvin believed the Bible taught about God, Christ, the nature of man, immortality, sin, redemption, the manner in which God's grace works in the lives of men, the Church, and the relations between Church and state. Calvin stressed the sovereignty of God and submission to His will.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 752.

<sup>59</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 752.

<sup>60</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 753.

His writings had a profound effect upon the entire Reformation period in Europe, and the early American colonies. His impact is evidenced in early documents of the American Founding Fathers.

Calvin began his ministry in Paris, but France, being a predominantly Catholic nation, brought severe persecution to Protestants. After six Protestants were tortured and burned to death, Calvin fled to and settled in Basel. However, he did not stay long, and eventually settled in Geneva in 1541. Geneva eventually became a haven for 6,000 Reformed refugees from England, Scotland, and France. This was largely of Calvin's doing because he built a university that became the only school in Europe for the training of Reformed ministers. Geneva became known as the capital of the Reformed movement.<sup>61</sup> Finally, he assisted in the translation of the Bible known as the Geneva Bible of 1560.<sup>62</sup>

### John Knox

Born around 1514, John Knox of Scotland was a third influential man of the Reformed movement. He is considered the pioneer of the Presbyterian wing of the Reformed Church. He was ordained to the priesthood after studying in a Scottish university. Sometime between 1543 and 1546, Knox came under the teaching of a reformer by the name of George Wishart.<sup>63</sup> Wishart was arrested for heresy and publicly burned to death. This was a time of great turmoil in Scotland as France was ruling Scotland. Knox fled from place to place due to persecution. He went to England in 1549

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<sup>61</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 105.

<sup>63</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 106.

where the English Reformation was in full swing, and he eventually ended up in Geneva, where he became a disciple of John Calvin.<sup>64</sup> While in Geneva, he worked with Calvin and his team on the translation of the Geneva Bible.<sup>65</sup>

However, Knox could not forget about his beloved Scotland. Between 1555 and 1560, Knox made several trips back to preach and promote the Reformation in his country. Finally, by August 1560, the Scottish Parliament turned toward the Reformation and adopted a confession of faith drafted by Knox and others.<sup>66</sup> It declared that the Pope no longer had any jurisdiction in Scotland, and it forbid the mass from being celebrated. At this point, the Reformation was complete in Scotland.

Just as with Luther, it can be said of Zwingli, Calvin and Knox: The Bible and its translation into the vernacular languages of the day was at the center of the Reformation. Without the Scriptures and the ability of people to read it and understand its teachings, there never would have been a Reformation.

### The English Reformation

England was shaken by what happened in Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland. As a result, it swept out over the Atlantic to hit the shores of the British Colonies and North America. Waiting to give attention to the English Reformation was not because it was less important than in other parts of Europe; it was just as significant. Indeed, through the global spread of English-speaking peoples in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and

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<sup>64</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 770.

<sup>65</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 106.

<sup>66</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 771.

especially the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and the Missions activity which emanated from the English churches, it was worldwide in its influence.<sup>67</sup>

The developments of English Christianity in the Reformation period are important for understanding the “Modern Missions Era.” The Protestant Reformation impacted England simultaneously with the rest of Western Europe. The main strains of the Reformation from Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, the Reformed churches of the Rhine Valley, Holland, and Anabaptists all influenced what happened in England. Yet, in taking them over, the English worked them into a texture which was essentially and characteristically English.<sup>68</sup>

The same hand of Providence that moved the rest of Europe with a thirst for the knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew manuscripts during the Renaissance; and the rise of hundreds of movable-type printing presses prepared the way for the impact of the Reformation upon England. However, access to the Bible in England brought a new revelation of God’s ways. And, the revival that we call the Reformation came from this revelation.

It did not take long for Luther’s writings to reach Oxford and Cambridge. At Cambridge, Thomas Bilney secretly bought a copy of Erasmus’s Greek New Testament, with its Latin translation, and began to read it. When he came to 1 Timothy 1:15, the words pierced his heart and he trusted Jesus for his salvation. His life changed from that day on and caused him to start leading study groups near Cambridge. Bilney picked a place called the White Horse Inn to hold these meetings. It was nicknamed “Little Germany” because Luther’s writings were often discussed, and it became the meeting

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<sup>67</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 797.

<sup>68</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 797.

place for scholars from Cambridge who gathered to discuss subjects that were prohibited in the classroom. The result was cataclysmic.<sup>69</sup> Many English Reformation leaders such as Hugh Latimer, John Frith, and William Tyndale came out of these meetings.

There is much historical detail available to about the English Reformation. However, there are only certain details that lend themselves to the purpose of this thesis-project. One detail is the intense persecution that the English Reformation endured. The persecution in England was greater than in Luther's Germany and Calvin's Geneva. Not only was it more prevalent, but also more cruel. The persecutors did not just kill the reformers by hanging or shooting them; they were tortured while they were being killed. Slow boiling and being burned alive were common. Often, they were given the opportunity to recant their faith in Christ and His Word while being stretched out upon the rack as every limb of their body was being pulled out of joint. Yet, these men and women considered it a privilege to be martyred for their faith in Jesus.

### John Foxe

John Foxe was born in 1517, the year Martin Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Wittenberg, and the year that Thomas Bilney bought his illegal copy of Erasmus' New Testament. He became the historian of the English Reformation, and we are deeply indebted to him for his accounts of many martyrdoms.<sup>70</sup>

From about 1545 to 1570, Foxe compiled and edited accounts of Christian persecution from the time of Wycliffe to his present day. In 1571, an order was given by the king to place a copy of Foxe's 1570 Second Edition in every cathedral church of

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<sup>69</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 126.

<sup>70</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 124.



England. It became the leading textbook for the period of history with which it dealt. It also served as a reading guide for private education. Until the publication of Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* a hundred years later, it was second only to the Bible in popularity.<sup>71</sup>

### William Tyndale

There were many very influential leaders that had an impact during the English Reformation period. This spiritual awakening seems to have hit England in waves during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For this purpose of thesis-project, William Tyndale must be mentioned. His ministry laid a foundation which affected all the great leaders who came after him.

Tyndale is, in most respects, the father of the English Bible.<sup>72</sup> He was a brilliant scholar and theologian. William received his Master's degree from Oxford at age 21. After finishing at Oxford, he went to Cambridge where he was influenced by Erasmus. Erasmus was professor of Greek at Cambridge, and he compiled and edited the Greek New Testament Scriptures into the *Textus Receptus*.<sup>73</sup>

Tyndale's knowledge of Greek, and his love for studying the New Testament in its original language, greatly influenced his life purpose. He was also a gifted linguist, skilled in eight languages; Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, English, and German. It was said, that he spoke most of these as if they were his native language. This served him well as he was always on the run from authorities for his work.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 124.

<sup>72</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 140.

<sup>73</sup> Susan Michele Bourgoïn, *Encyclopedia of World Biography* (Farmington Hill, MI: Gale Research, 1998).

<sup>74</sup> Greatsite.com, updated November 2017, accessed November 12, 2017, [www.greatsite.com](http://www.greatsite.com).

Even though Wycliffe's Bible came 143 years before Tyndale's, Wycliffe's Bible was translated from the Latin Vulgate and had never been printed. Tyndale translated his, from both Greek and Hebrew. It was also printed in mass on the Gutenberg style presses for the people of England. Tyndale saw the affect Luther's Bible had upon Germans, and he wanted to do the same for England. Tyndale also experienced the awakening at Cambridge through the Bilney study groups. He was convinced that if English speaking people could have a Bible that they could understand, then they too would be transformed by the Word of God. He became filled with a passion to translate the Bible into the language of the English commoner. It became the task of his life and the cause of his death.<sup>75</sup>

One hundred years before Tyndale's time, a law was passed in England that anyone reading or writing Scripture in any language other than Latin would be subject to death. It was still being enforced in England at this time. So, since it was so dangerous for him to do his work of Bible translation in England, he had to leave his country, never able to return. Tyndale went to Germany, and this is where he did his translation work. In fact, it was in Wittenberg, Luther's town, that Tyndale completed the translation of his New Testament from Greek to English in 1525.

We know very little of Tyndale's history while in Germany. He kept it secret because England sent spies throughout Europe looking to arrest him. There is no historical record of whether Tyndale and Luther ever met. However, by the fact that Tyndale did his translation work in Wittenberg, and the visible evidence of Luther's

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<sup>75</sup> Greatsite.com.

German translation having certain similarities in part to Tyndale's, provides evidence that they may have met.

In 1526, the translation was printed in Worms, Germany. Thousands of New Testaments were smuggled into England by hiding them in merchandise such as barrels, bales of cotton, and sacks of flour.<sup>76</sup> King Henry VIII opposed the translation, and church officials condemned it. Thousands of copies were confiscated by authorities and publicly burned.<sup>77</sup> But opposition only proved to fuel the momentum. The demand for more Bibles in England grew at an alarming rate. Thousands were printed, and thousands were copied as the thirst for the Word of God spread throughout the country.

There was now a price on Tyndale's head. Bounty hunters from England began traveling Europe, wearing disguises, paying for information and tracking down all leads. Yet, they could not find him. Under disguise, Tyndale moved to Marburg to begin working on his Old Testament translation from Hebrew. Being pursued by authorities, he later moved to Hamburg, then to Antwerp to continue his translation. In Antwerp, John Firth and Miles Coverdale joined him in the work. Firth died a martyr by being burned at the stake in Smithfield for his work with Tyndale. Coverdale survived until 1568 and played a major part of finishing the Tyndale Old Testament.<sup>78</sup>

In 1535, William was betrayed by a supposed friend to the authorities and imprisoned. Five months later, at age 41, he was strapped to a pillar, strangled, and burned. They silenced the man, but they could not destroy the Word of God that he had

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<sup>76</sup> Mary Fairchild, "William Tyndale Biography," updated March 11, 2017, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://christianity.about.com/od/Christians-In-History/a/William-Tyndale.htm>.

<sup>77</sup> Fairchild, "William Tyndale Biography."

<sup>78</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 142.

provided to the English people. In fact, the Tyndale translation has influenced every succeeding English translation of the Bible up to the present day.

In 1611, the 54 scholars who produced the King James Bible drew significantly from Tyndale, as well as translations that descended from his. One estimate suggests that the New Testament in the King James Version is 83 percent Tyndale's, and the Old Testament 76 percent.<sup>79</sup>

Tyndale's influence in England continued after his death. Several new translations began rolling off the presses. All of them had Tyndale's imprint, sometimes even not initially being recognized. These were the Great Bible and the Matthew Bible.

In 1553, "Bloody Mary" came to the throne of England. She was married to Philip II of Spain, who was a strong proponent of the Inquisition. Mary forbade the public use of Scripture, and this drove many reformers out of England to Geneva. Miles Coverdale and John Knox were among these men.

### The Geneva Bible

Under the supervision of John Calvin, a strong group of translators painstakingly worked over each verse in detail to produce the most scholarly translation up to that point, using Tyndale's translation, translations in other languages, and Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. This Geneva Bible proved to be so good that a complete revision was never

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<sup>79</sup> Naomi Tudmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16.

needed.<sup>80</sup> The methods used worked so well that they were later adopted by the committees who worked on the King James Version.<sup>81</sup>

The Geneva Bible is history's first study Bible, being the first translation to include marginal notes. These study aids included the first cross-reference verses, introductions to each book of the Bible, maps, and indexes. John Calvin and his scholarly friends wrote most of these aids.<sup>82</sup> It was intended for personal use, rather than for reading in the churches. Therefore, it was printed in a smaller size to make it more convenient to carry. In addition, it was the first English Bible with verse divisions, and the translators indicated words in the translation which were not included in the original texts by using a different type set for these words. This practice was adopted in future translations.

Although the Geneva Bible was never officially sanctioned for public use in England, these innovations helped make it the "household" Bible. Though printed in 1560, it continued as the most popular Bible, well past the time the King James Version was completed. It was the Puritan's Bible, and it was the Bible the British Commonwealth army carried. It was the Bible exclusively used by the Pilgrim Fathers and carried by them on the *Mayflower* to Plymouth, Massachusetts, and it was the Bible used by Shakespeare, Milton, and John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).<sup>83</sup>

Although King James of England tried to ban the Geneva Bible because the study notes condemned the 'Divine Right of Kings' and undermined the authority of the Pope,

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<sup>80</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 155.

<sup>81</sup> Connolly, *Indestructible Book*, 155.

<sup>82</sup> Bruce Metzger, "The Geneva Bible of 1560," *Theology Today* October 1960.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Ackroyd, *Shakespeare: The Biography* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2006), 54.

he could not stop its popularity. Even after authorizing another translation to be done, *The King James Version*, which did not have study notes, the *Geneva Bible* remained the most popular among Puritans, and it remained in widespread use until after the English Civil War.<sup>84</sup>

Although it is mostly forgotten today by the majority of the Christian public, the Geneva Bible was the most widely read and influential English Bible of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Geneva translation and footnotes were the biblical foundation for the American Republic and its Founding Fathers.<sup>85</sup>

As can be seen from the first 100 years of the Reformation, it was, above all else, a movement of access to the Bible in languages that the masses of people could cherish and understand. As both the scholars and common folk of Europe could read and understand the Bible for themselves, their understanding of spiritual truth exploded and brought change to the Church. This brought an ever-changing evolution to Christian understanding and Church renewal. There was a continual push to go back to the principles of the New Testament Church; to Jesus and the Apostles. Many called it a purification of the Church. Many such groups arose out of the English Reformation such as the *Puritans*, the *Baptists*, and later on the *Methodists*.

### Puritans

The Puritan movement rose in the late 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries in England. The Puritans wished to “purify” the Church of England from all traces of Roman Catholicism. Their desire was for the Church of England to resemble more closely the Protestant churches of

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<sup>84</sup> Cleland Boyd McAfee, *Study of the King James Bible* (Brooklyn, NY: Project Gutenberg).

<sup>85</sup> Tolle Lege Press, “1599 Geneva Bible,” accessed November 12, 2017, <https://www.genevabible.com>.

Europe, especially Geneva.<sup>86</sup> Rather than separate from the Church and start a new denomination, their desire was to be more of a renewal movement in the church. However, this became increasingly difficult. The Puritans were influential during the reign of King James I, and their work with him helped produce the most widely read English translation of the Bible ever produced: *The King James Version*.

Puritanism was, above all else, a Bible movement.<sup>87</sup> The most characteristic feature of Puritanism was its respect for Scripture and its desire to know and carry out its commands. J.I. Packer (*Among God's Giants*) has suggested several principles by which the Puritans approached the Bible. First, they were very competent in their exegesis of Scripture. Most Puritan expositors were very knowledgeable of the biblical languages.<sup>88</sup> Second, they excelled in the area of application of Scripture to their daily lives. The Puritans viewed the Bible as fully authoritative for all issues of faith and morals. They believed they needed nothing other than the written Word of God. Richard Baxter, Thomas Cartwright, and John Owen were some of the men who carried forward this Bible movement.

However, many Puritans experienced persecution for their views. Due to these difficulties and their strong views, some began to separate from the Church of England. Often, they were referred to as dissenters and separatists. Some fled the persecution to Holland. These Puritan Separatists became known as “the Pilgrims.”

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<sup>86</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Reformation World* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2000), 304.

<sup>87</sup> Ken Baker, “The Puritans and the Bible,” posted November 16, 2007, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://kenbaker.wordpress.com/2007/11/16/the-puritans-and-the-bible/>.

<sup>88</sup> J.I. Packer, *Among God's Giants: Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway Publications, 1991), 125.

Due to financial difficulties in Holland and their concern over the morals of Holland, the Puritan Separatists decided to immigrate to America. We now know them as the Pilgrims who established an English colony in Plymouth, which became a part of the Massachusetts colony. In 1620, the Puritan pilgrims received a charter from the King of England that legitimized their colony, allowing them to do trade and commerce with merchants in England.<sup>89</sup> This marked the beginning of the Protestant presence in America, and the Reformation spread to the New World.

The original intent of the colonists was to establish spiritual Puritanism, which had been denied them in England and the rest of Europe; to engage in peaceful commerce with England and the Native Americans, and to Christianize the peoples of the Americas.<sup>90</sup> The moral foundations of the early United States came from the emphasis on godly behavior by Puritan leaders. Even Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting America in the 1830's, declared that Puritanism was the primary foundation that gave rise to the democratic republic known as The United States of America.<sup>91</sup>

### Baptists

The Baptists was a second group that arose out of the English Reformation, also emerging out of the Puritan-Separatist movement in the Church of England. Although it is difficult to determine whether Baptists started in England or Holland, it can be agreed they were a people of the Book. Most historians agree that John Smyth, a graduate of

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<sup>89</sup> William Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 299.

<sup>90</sup> Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 299.

<sup>91</sup> "What Is Puritanism and What Did the Puritans Believe?" *Got Questions?org*, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Puritans-Puritanism.html>.



Cambridge was the original leader of the Baptists.<sup>92</sup> Smyth was the leader of a Puritan Separatist group in England known as the Gainsborough remnant. English law prohibited independent churches, and King James vowed to deal harshly with any who refused to attend the Church of England. In 1607, the Gainsborough group migrated across the English Channel to Amsterdam, a city that provided religious liberty.<sup>93</sup> About a year later, Smyth became convinced from the New Testament that baptism was for believers only. So, he disbanded his church and reformed it on a new basis of a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ, followed by believer's baptism.<sup>94</sup> It is interesting to note that they did not name themselves. Rather, their opponents who ridiculed them for their practice of immersion began calling them "Baptists."<sup>95</sup>

During the middle to late period of the Reformation, the *Scientific Revolution* emerged out of the Renaissance. During this time of focus on the knowledge of the Ancients, not only were the ancient Greek, Latin, and Hebrew manuscripts of Christianity and Judaism discovered, but the writings of early Greek and Roman mathematicians and scientists were recovered. This led to the rise of such men as Galileo of Pisa and Sir Isaac Newton. This period of science and reason became known as the *Age of Enlightenment*, and it was a secular, humanist movement that challenged all existing political and religious authority.

For Reformation Christians, this just reinforced their focus on Scripture as the final authority for faith and practice. However, it presented many challenges to the

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<sup>92</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 818.

<sup>93</sup> "Vibrant Future, Timeless History," accessed November 12, 2017, <http://baptisthistory.org>.

<sup>94</sup> "Vibrant Future."

<sup>95</sup> "Vibrant Future."

Church of England and Roman Catholicism. Yet, God had an answer to this challenge during the 18<sup>th</sup> and final century of the Reformation.

It was the *Evangelical Revival, and Methodism* in England; and the *First Great Awakening* in the American colonies.<sup>96</sup> Before looking at the final century of the Reformation period, it is necessary to look back one more time to the beginning, because many times, it is the “blood of the martyrs” that becomes the “seed of the church.”

### John Hus

Sixty years before we hear of Martin Luther, there was a Czech reformer from Prague, John Hus. Hus wanted to return the Church in Bohemia and Moravia to the practices of early Christianity.<sup>97</sup> He was inspired by John Wycliffe, who was the first to make the English translation of the Bible available to ordinary people. In the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, Hus had committed heresy. He believed that everyone should be allowed to read the Bible in their own language., but that concept was unthinkable to the established Church that reserved that privilege for clergy and other elites who could read Latin. He also opposed the selling of indulgences, which were being used to raise money for the building of the Vatican. This practice taught people that indulgences provided the ability to buy or earn pardon for sin, instead of trusting in Christ’s redemption through the cross.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 263.

<sup>97</sup> Christian d’Elvert, *Geschichte der Studien* (Prague, Austria: University of Olmutz, 1857).

<sup>98</sup> “The Moravians & Count Zinzendorf,” accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.crossroad.to./heaven/Excerpts/books/history/hand-of-God/moravian.htm>.

Hus was tried and found guilty, and when asked to recant, he refused. Instead, he knelt and prayed that God would forgive his accusers. Mocked and humiliated, he was led naked to the stake, where executioners covered him with wood and straw for the torturous fire.<sup>99</sup>

Given a last chance to recant, he answered, “In the truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached I will die today with gladness.” The fire was lit using pages from the forbidden Bible printed by John Wycliffe. Enveloped in flames, Hus kept singing an old hymn, “Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me.”<sup>100</sup>

Like their leader, the followers of Hus based their fellowship on the Bible. Even Martin Luther expressed his appreciation for their understanding of salvation by faith, church discipline, and the priesthood of all believers. Hus’s followers fled from Prague to small villages throughout Europe. By 1517, they numbered at least 200,000 with over 400 churches. However, over time their numbers dwindled. They often suffered persecution for their practices.

#### Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and the Moravians

We do not hear a lot about this group again until about 1722. After John Hus, Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was their most well-known leader. Zinzendorf studied law to please his family, but his real interest was in his relationship with Jesus. He was considered a Pietist. Pietism was a renewal movement in the Lutheran church with a Reformed emphasis on personal conversion, individual holiness, and living a vigorous

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<sup>99</sup> “The Moravians.”

<sup>100</sup> “The Moravians.”

Christian life.<sup>101</sup> He studied at the center of Pietism in Halle, Germany. Zinzendorf had an ardent devotion to Jesus so that he said of himself, “I have one passion, tis He”<sup>102</sup>

Seeing persecuted Protestants fleeing for their lives, he decided to take them into his estate. They named this new village, Hernhut. He became a bishop of their church, and it was here that they became known as the “Moravians.”<sup>103</sup>

Zinzendorf also is known for having a global vision for the spread of the gospel. No one really knows where he got this missionary vision because it was rare during the Reformation period. Rather, local evangelism and personal conversion were strong teachings and practices throughout Europe during this period. Although revival and renewal occurred in the Church as people were able to read the Bible for themselves and find new life in Christ, the teaching and practice of global missions was not talked about much.

Moravian historians state that something very significant happened to them on August 13, 1727. The new village, Hernhut (the Lord’s Watch) had become a shelter for oppressed Hussites, Anabaptists, and Lutherans who had fled persecution because they had embraced salvation by faith alone.<sup>104</sup> However, it became increasingly difficult for them to live in peace with one another. It is recorded that the community underwent a dramatic transformation when the inhabitants of Hernhut “learned to love one another.” This happened as a result of an experience which they attributed to a visitation of the Holy Spirit, similar to that recorded in the Bible on the day of Pentecost.<sup>105</sup> As a result, a

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<sup>101</sup> Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996).

<sup>102</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 897.

<sup>103</sup> “The Moravians.”

<sup>104</sup> “The Moravians.”

<sup>105</sup> D’Elvert, *Geschichte der Studien*.

spirit of unity came to the diverse group, and the revival continued unhindered. The Moravians became a center of church renewal and mission outreach. From 1732, missionaries were sent to the Caribbean islands and the American colonies.

### The Evangelical Revival

God used the Moravians to “strike a match” to start a flame for the last great revivals of the Reformation period, the *Evangelical Revival* in Europe, and the *First Great Awakening* in America.<sup>106</sup> In 1735, John and Charles Wesley sailed to Georgia as missionaries to evangelize the Indians. Two years earlier, James Oglethorpe settled the colony on behalf of the Trustees for the Establishment of the Colony of Georgia in America. Oglethorpe wanted Wesley to be the minister of the newly formed Savannah parish.<sup>107</sup> While on the ship sailing for America, John Wesley met some Moravians who were coming to America for mission’s work, and he was moved by their strong faith and deep commitment to Christ. At one point during the voyage, a storm broke the mast off the ship. While the English panicked, the Moravians calmly sang hymns and prayed, leading Wesley to believe that the Moravians had something he lacked.<sup>108</sup>

Arriving in Savannah, he met the Moravian leader, August Spangenberg. Spangenberg asked Wesley, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” John could only reply, “I know he is the Savior of the world.” Whereupon Spangenberg replied, “True, but do you know that he has saved you?”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 263.

<sup>107</sup> Kathy Ross and Rosemary Stacey, *John Wesley and Savannah*, September 18, 2007.

<sup>108</sup> Ross and Stacey, *John Wesley*.

<sup>109</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1024.

After about three years of laboring in Georgia with little spiritual fruit, Wesley returned to England feeling a sense of failure in what he had attempted to do. It was at this point that he turned to the Moravians again. Both he and Charles sought counsel from a young Moravian missionary who was in London waiting for permission to sail to Georgia as a missionary. Peter Bohler spoke to them of self-surrender, instantaneous conversion, and joy in conscious salvation.<sup>110</sup>

### John Wesley

On May 24, 1738, John found what he had been searching for. That evening, he attended a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. His journal recounts that experience. While Luther's preface to the *Commentary on Romans* was being read, there suddenly broke upon him something similar to what that epistle had brought to the tortured soul of the German: "About a quarter before nine, while he (Luther) was describing the change that God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."<sup>111</sup>

Just like Luther, for Wesley, it was an encounter with the Bible, and the words written within it, that changed his life. This pattern has been repeated thousands upon thousands of times, and is still being repeated around the world.

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis-project, it is important to note that John Wesley is best known for starting Methodism in England and America. Given the impact the Bible had on his life, and on the Evangelical Revivals of England and

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<sup>110</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1025.

<sup>111</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1025.

America, it should be no surprise that the Bible was the most dominant influence upon Methodist thought. These revivals did much to restore the Bible to its former prominence during this time of the *Enlightenment* in both England and America.<sup>112</sup>

Wesley believed that all spiritual revelation and all spiritual experiences must be tested and proven by the testimony of Scripture. He believed, as did other reformers, that God revealed Himself in a Book. He believed man could only understand that Book as God revealed it by His Spirit. In his sermon, *An Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Wesley said, “I am a spirit come from God and returning to God... I want to know one thing, the way to heaven. God Himself has condescended to teach me the way... He has written it in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: it is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unis libri (a man of one book).”<sup>113</sup>

This approach to the Bible, respect for the Bible, and love for the Bible were key elements in the success to these revivals of the Reformation period. It was from the foundation of *Sola Scriptura* (Only Scripture) that the Reformation was born. It was *Sola Scriptura* that empowered the transformation of the church during this time. The Reformation of the Church was now prepared for a mighty movement of worldwide growth, the Modern Missions Era, which was about to begin.

### **Modern Missions Era**

Typically, the Modern Missions Era of Church history is believed to have started about 1800 AD, continuing to modern day. However, before entering this new era of

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<sup>112</sup> “John Wesley and What He Believed,” accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.imarc.cc/br/breckbill.html>.

<sup>113</sup> “John Wesley.”

Church history, a few men and movements need mentioning that planted seeds to help this new era begin.<sup>114</sup> These individuals inspired William Carey, who most consider to be the father of the Modern Missions Era.

### John Eliot

John Eliot left his England home, arriving in New England less than 30 years after the Pilgrims, because he had a desire to preach the Gospel to Native Americans in the New England colonies. The missionary cause of the Church was not being talked about by many at this time. However, he responded to the voice of God speaking to him to leave comfortable England and come to the unknown frontiers of America to give the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the “Indians.”

Eliot and his co-laborer, Thomas Mayhew, learned the Algonquian language in order to preach to them in a language the Indians could understand. They believed these Native Americans should have the Word of God in their language, and they were instrumental in translating the Bible in their native language and having it printed for them. Eliot, Mayhew, and some other missionaries went on to produce other printed books for them in the Algonquian language.<sup>115</sup> Working tirelessly, by writing letters and tracts for his evangelistic cause, Eliot worked to persuade his supporters in England to contribute financially to these evangelical efforts.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> The Reformation period did not end with the advent of the Modern Missions Era. It helped birth it and overlapped it.

<sup>115</sup> “From English to Algonquian,” accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/EnglishtoAlgonquian/societyfor%20the%20propagation>.

<sup>116</sup> “From English to Algonquian.”



In response to Eliot's call, an organization was formed in London to spread the Gospel in the English North American colonies. By an act of British Parliament in 1649, the first Protestant missionary society was formed, *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England*. Its purpose was "for the advancement of civilization and Christianity among the Indians of New England." It was formed by 16 original members to raise money to be used "in such manner as shall best and principally conduce to the preaching and propagating of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the Natives, and also for maintaining of schools, and nurseries of learning, and for the better education of the children of the natives."<sup>117</sup>

### Zinzendorf

The German Count von Zinzendorf, discussed in the earlier section on the Reformation, was a forerunner to the Modern Missions Era. He was a wealthy man who had a great desire to serve God. In 1722, hearing about some Moravian families fleeing persecution in Bohemia and Moravia, he took them in to live on his estate. Other families followed and out of that came a village which they named Herrnhut.

Two events occurred that shaped Zinzendorf's ministry, which deserve noting. The first occurred in 1727. Even though the Moravian community was very devoted to prayer and the Word of God, they were composed of many different groups, including the Hussites, Baptists, and Lutherans, with differing theological opinions, and they were having a difficult time getting along in their church community. Documents record that on August 13 of that year, the community underwent a dramatic transformation when the

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<sup>117</sup> "From English to Algonquian."

inhabitants of Herrnhut “learned to love one another.”<sup>118</sup> This experience was attributed to a visitation of the Holy Spirit, similar to that recorded in the Bible on the day of Pentecost.<sup>119</sup> This transformed the church community into a unified force for the Gospel.

The second event occurred in 1731. Zinzendorf was invited to Denmark for the coronation of a new king. During a dinner at the Danish palace, Zinzendorf was served by a Christian slave named Anthony from the Danish West Indies.<sup>120</sup> In their book, *Count Zinzendorf*, Janet and Geoff Bengtson describe their conversation:

“Tell me, how did you come to hear of Christ?” Ludwig asked. Surprised that one of the dinner guests would ask him questions of a personal nature, Anthony answered, “I first heard of Christ when I was on the ship coming to Europe.” “What do you mean, first heard of?” Ludwig asked. “St. Thomas has been ruled by European countries for many years. Surely you must have heard of Jesus Christ before then... Tell me, how is it that you could live on a Christian island and not know about Jesus Christ?”

“Perhaps a story will help you understand, sir” Anthony replied. “When I was a child, a slave who was a coach driver drove his master to church. While the service was going on inside, the slave was expected to wait with the carriage. But this slave became curious. The doors were closed, so he crept up to them and put his ear to the door to hear what was being said inside. Someone saw him and reported him to his master. The slave owner took out a knife and cut his ears off right there on the church steps.”

Ludwig felt his stomach turn as he pictured such a gruesome act, on the steps of a church no less.

“You need to understand that the white people on Saint Thomas do not want their slaves to hear about Jesus Christ. They fear that the message will fill their heads with new ideas and cause them to rebel.”<sup>121</sup>

Filled with compassion, Zinzendorf invited Anthony to come and share his testimony at Herrnhut. The former slave accepted, and his message stirred the Moravians with a deep commitment to go wherever God would send them. A year later, in 1732,

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<sup>118</sup> D’Elvert, *Geschichte der Studien*.

<sup>119</sup> D’Elvert, *Geschichte der Studien*.

<sup>120</sup> “The Moravians.”

<sup>121</sup> “The Moravians.”

after much prayer and preparation, the first two Moravian missionaries were sent to the West Indies.

This began a steady stream of missionaries who went to Greenland, Africa, South America, and the American colonies. It was on his way to Georgia, that John Wesley met a Moravian missionary that planted the seed of the Gospel into Wesley's heart that would eventually bring about his conversion. This sparked what church historians refer to as the Evangelical Revival in England.

Zinzendorf also had a great effect on William Carey, considered to be the "father of modern missions." In his book, *The Hand of God in History*, Rev. Hollis Read records that Carey followed the Moravian missionaries and their activities. In fact, after reading a Moravian missionary journal, first published in 1790, Carey exclaimed, "See what these Moravians have done! Can't we Baptists at least attempt something in fealty to the same Lord?"<sup>122</sup>

Zinzendorf has not received enough credit for his impact upon Church history. He was a leader who's forward-looking vision and commitment to Jesus Christ was used by God to impact Wesley, Carey, and many others of that day. Eternity will tell the full story.

During this time period, there arose a movement among the Church which many call the *Evangelical Revival*. It was bigger than a movement led by one man. It impacted two continents; Europe and North America. John Wesley was the prominent figure of Europe. George Whitfield and Johnathan Edwards were the prominent leaders in the American colonies. It is interesting to note that Wesley was an Arminian; Whitfield and

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<sup>122</sup> Hollis Read, *The Hand of God in History* (Philadelphia, PA: John E. Potter and Company, 1870).

Edwards were Calvinists. Both groups experienced the blessing of God upon their ministries. Why? Both stressed the need for a personal conversion to Christ. Church historians refer to the revival in Europe as the *Evangelical Revival*. They refer to the revival in the Thirteen Colonies in America as *The Great Awakening*. They were two parts of the same movement of God's Spirit. The emphasis of the revivals was upon the transformation of the individual through faith in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, through complete dedication to God, and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Those so committed were ardently missionary and sought to win others to a similar experience.<sup>123</sup>

### Missionary Societies and Agencies

During these years, the revival brought about the formation of a number of missionary societies, including the *Baptist Missionary Society*, *London Missionary Society*, and the *British and Foreign Bible Society*.<sup>124</sup>

It is important to note that these revivals, movements, and missionary societies were all the result of what initially started with the Reformation. There was always a continual looking back to the Bible; especially to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts to discover what Jesus and the Apostles taught regarding the Early Church. It was this desire to be faithful to the patterns and principles of the Word of God that influenced the activities of the forerunners of the Modern Missions Era and the birthing of this new era in Church history.

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<sup>123</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1031.

<sup>124</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1032.

## William Carey

In the late 1700's, the Modern Missions Era began in England as an outgrowth of the *Evangelical Revival*. William Carey, a teacher, shoemaker, and pastor became deeply moved by the commands of Jesus to take the Gospel to nations which had not heard of Jesus.

On October 2, 1792, Carey and eleven other young pastors met in Mrs. Beeby Wallis' parlor to discuss the question of whether Jesus' command to the apostles to take the Gospel to every nation was relevant for their day. They were not a likely group to begin a world-wide missionary work. The twelve ministers were all from very small churches in the district of Kettering, England. Yet, they had become increasingly convinced that their churches should send the gospel message to all nations. Many Christians of that day believed it was not their responsibility to preach the gospel message to the heathen. In fact, it was a common belief that if God wanted the heathen saved, he would do it without human help.<sup>125</sup>

Carey could not accept these views. He said the Apostles were commanded by Jesus to teach all nations; and since the promise of the Gospel was still true, surely the command to teach all nations was still true. Carey wrote his thoughts in a booklet titled, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians To Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. In it, he wrote about the state of the world in his day, the need for missions, and the methods which should be used to carry out this task.<sup>126</sup> He opens Section 1 with

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<sup>125</sup> "Baptist Missionary Society Formed in England," accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.christianity.com/print/11630321/>.

<sup>126</sup> "Baptist Missionary."

the words, “An Enquiry whether the Commission given by our Lord to his Disciples be not still binding on us.”<sup>127</sup>

Carey’s booklet, and his address to the other pastors that day, stirred them to action. They decided to form the *Baptist Missionary Society* for the spreading of the Gospel among the heathen, they appointed a Secretary, Andrew Fuller, and opened a treasury for financial support for the mission. The next year, they sent Cary to India as their first missionary. This was the first missionary society to be formed out of the *Evangelical Revival* of the last half of the eighteenth century.

When Carey arrived in India, he saw the need to be able to communicate the Gospel in a language the people could understand. So, he immediately set out to learn the major languages of India, and to translate the Bible into their languages. Along with two co-workers, Marshman and Ward, they translated and printed part or all of the Bible into several languages of India and East Asia, including Chinese.<sup>128</sup> This was perhaps his greatest gift to the church in India.

The formation of the *Baptist Missionary Society* spawned several more missionary societies. The *London Missionary Society* was the first non-denominational missionary society to be formed. It was intended to enlist the support of those of “Evangelical” sentiments, regardless of denomination.<sup>129</sup> In 1796, the *Scottish Missionary Society* and the *Glasgow Missionary Society* were formed. In 1799, Evangelicals within the Church of England formed the *Church Missionary Society*, and that same year, the *Religious Tract Society* was organized for the spread of Christian literature. Then, in

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<sup>127</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into The Obligations of Christians To Use Means for The Conversion of The Heathen* (New York, NY: Pantianos Classics. 1792), 7.

<sup>128</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1033.

<sup>129</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1033.

1804, the *British and Foreign Bible Societies*, the forerunner of the *United Bible Society* and *American Bible Society*, were founded.<sup>130</sup>

During the early 1800's, other pioneer missionaries, such as Henry Martyn and Robert Morrison, came to India and China with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Martyn was known for preaching to the Hindus and Moslems of India, and he translated the New Testament into three more Indian languages. He died at age 31. Morrison is reputed to be the first Protestant missionary to China, and he translated the entire Bible into Chinese, using it as an evangelistic tool.

Again, the Bible, and its translation into languages the people could understand, was the leading edge of evangelistic work. The Word of God is the tip of the spiritual sword; it is the sword itself (Ephesians 6:17).

The Modern Missions Era began a little slower in North America than it did in England. In August 1806, during a summer rainstorm, five college students from Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, gathered under a haystack to talk and pray for the people of Asia who did not know Christ yet.<sup>131</sup> Within four years, they helped start the first Missions Agency in America called the *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*.

By 1812, the first American missionaries, Adoniram and Ann Judson, were sent out from Tabernacle Congregational Church in Salem, Massachusetts.<sup>132</sup> They were joined by Luther Rice, and Samuel and Harriett Newell. Judson headed for India, but ended up in Burma. Judson, who already knew Latin, Greek and Hebrew, immediately

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<sup>130</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1033.

<sup>131</sup> Mission Park: *Religious Revival*. Williams University

<sup>132</sup> Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2008), 214.

began studying Burmese grammar so that he could translate the Bible into that language. It took him three years to master it.

Again, we see the impact of the Bible as the tool of evangelism and indigenizing the Gospel into the new culture. It was four years before he ever attempted any type of evangelism with the Burmese people. By 1817, he was able to translate the *Gospel of Matthew*. The first believer was baptized in 1819, and there were 18 believers by 1822.<sup>133</sup> He completed his first draft of the New Testament a year later.

This began a steady stream of missionaries from both Europe and America who took the Gospel to all the world. To support this effort, The Evangelical Awakening produced two renowned evangelists during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Charles Finney and Dwight Moody.

From the Moody movement, came two more important figures for the Modern Missions Era, John Mott and Robert Wilder. Mott held evangelistic meetings in universities. Wilder introduced the *Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions*, which began at a summer student conference under Moody's leadership in 1886.<sup>134</sup> This movement spread powerfully through colleges, universities, and seminaries in the United States. Out of this movement, sprang the *Student Christian Movement* of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>135</sup> Mott, Wilder, and Robert Speer created a unity of purpose and common identity among students that carried over into their missionary work. As the earliest missionary movement in North America was started by the five students from the

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<sup>133</sup> Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson* (King of Prussia, PA: Judson Press, 1987), 50.

<sup>134</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1163.

<sup>135</sup> Latourette, *History of Christianity*, 1163.



*Haystack Prayer Meeting*, in a similar way, students were the catalyst for twentieth-century missions.<sup>136</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bible in vernacular languages continued to be the main weaponry of Protestant missionaries. As the Gospel spread around the world and traders of the expanding European empires went to new countries, these missionaries encountered more and more languages into which Scripture needed to be translated. During this century, translations of the Bible in whole or in part, were published in 400 new languages.<sup>137</sup>

### Twentieth-Century Revivals

The twentieth-century continued the missionary expansion that began 100 years earlier. However, new element entered onto the scene that caused an exponential explosion of expansion; indigenous revivals. This happened at almost the same time on three separate continents, Europe, North America, and Asia. Shaw says it best in his book, *Global Awakening: How 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution*. God was at work behind the scenes orchestrating this great symphony of religious revolution.<sup>138</sup>

First, there was the Welsh Revival in 1904. Evan Roberts, was a very dedicated Christian as a boy. From age eleven to age twenty-three, he worked in the coal mines of Wales. His real passion was for prayer and ministry. At age 25, he records that he

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<sup>136</sup> Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 116.

<sup>137</sup> <https://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac66>.

<sup>138</sup> Mark Shaw, *Global Awakening: How 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 11.

experienced an “anointing” by the Holy Spirit.<sup>139</sup> He began holding prayer meetings in his home for young adults, and a revival broke out into the wider church of Wales. He began traveling throughout the country preaching. A tremendous conviction of the Holy Spirit fell upon his meetings, and within two years, over 100,000 people were converted.

In 1906, a similar revival broke out in Los Angeles. On Azusa Street, an African-American evangelist, William Seymour, began preaching that the return of Christ was near and that God was pouring out His Spirit in these last days to raise up a great missionary force to preach the Gospel around the world. Unusual numbers of conversions occurred, and people prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel with power. News of this revival spread to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This seemed to set off similar sparks of revival on these continents.

While these revivals were taking place simultaneously, another revival broke out in Korea. This has been referred to as the *Korean Pentecost of 1907*.<sup>140</sup> Several factors, beyond the scope of this project, seemed to prepare Korea for this event. However, one of them is very pertinent to this thesis-project. In 1893, a vernacular translation of the Bible was completed. The Word of God was able to speak to the heart of the Korean people. Before this, Christianity was viewed as a foreign religion. One of the most significant aspects of the translation was the use of “Hananim” as the name of God. The translators borrowed this name from Korea’s historic shamanistic religion.<sup>141</sup>

The Korean revival hit Korea like a tidal wave for three years. It started a ripple effect upon the nation that continues today. At the famous Edinburgh Missionary

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<sup>139</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 21.

<sup>140</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 36.

<sup>141</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 37.

Conference of 1910, the revival in Korea was hailed as a “genuine Pentecost,” largely for the remarkable church growth that it inspired.<sup>142</sup> When the smoke had cleared, three hundred thousand Korean Christians stood where only a handful had stood two decades before.<sup>143</sup>

What is so amazing about these revivals is that they were not influenced by one another. In times past, great Christian leaders such as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Whitefield, and Moody traveled extensively preaching and bringing revival influences with them. In the revivals of the twentieth century, they were sovereign acts of spiritual awakening that often had no connection to one another. What has happened in this century of Christianity, moving from the Global North to the Global South, is truly amazing. No one predicted it. It just happened!

In fact, many saw the decline of Christianity taking place in Europe and North America during parts of the nineteenth century and predicted it would be worse in the twentieth century. However, God had a big surprise. Garth Rosell wrote a book describing it called, *The Surprising Work of God*. Mark Shaw describes it this way in his book, *Global Awakening*: “The twentieth century was an age of earthquakes. Yet one earthquake has escaped unnoticed. It was a cultural and spiritual earthquake. I refer to the resurgence of Christianity around the world. In the face of its decline in the West, Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America underwent a century of dramatic growth.”<sup>144</sup> This phenomenon will be further detailed in chapter six.

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<sup>142</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 45.

<sup>143</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 46.

<sup>144</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 10.

## CHAPTER 4

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reflects upon the books and articles read in order to resource this thesis-project. There has never been a book written on the subject of this thesis-project. Therefore, a lot of the writing, thinking, and conclusions that I arrive at will be new. This makes my thesis-project both very challenging to me, and very rewarding. The hope is that it will present the problem of the Bible Gap in a clear and compelling way, and that the recommended solutions will make a difference for the advancement of the Great Commission.

#### **Themes**

The two most important themes that require attention are the “Bible Gap” and the “Global South.”

#### **Bible Gap**

Bible Gap is not a common term. In fact, an internet search usually yields articles explaining scholarly views on creation, whether there were gaps between the “days” of creation. “Bible Gap” is more an internal term used by ministries that focus on providing Scripture for the world. Still, websites of these ministries used the term very little. Often, they talked about the concept, without using the exact term. This explains the lack of references within this thesis; Most of the present definition is original to this thesis.

## Global South

The second term, “Global South,” had an abundance of references. Given the high priority the United Nations places on poverty and injustice, it has written extensively on it.

Two sub-categories of the Global South provide an understanding of how the Bible Gap and the Global South interact. First, is the abundance of writings available that address the economic and political problems of the Global South. In addition, abundant comparisons between the Global South and the Global North reveal wide and stark differences between them.

The spiritual component of the Global South is the second sub-category. Much has been written on this topic in the form of articles and books, too. Though secular researchers and historians do not pay much attention to it, it has caught the attention of many Christian scholars. Among them are Philip Jenkins, Mark Shaw, Garth Rosell, and Scott Sunquist. During the past decade, they have written great books chronicling the amazing spiritual movement of Christianity southward over the past 100 years.

Three books, in particular, focus on this past 100-year movement of Christianity moving from the Northern hemisphere to the Global South. Mark Shaw’s *Global Awakening: How 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Triggered a Christian Revolution* describes this unexpected occurrence as an earthquake in magnitude. He begins by describing the San Francisco earthquake of 1906: “Just before dawn on April 18, 1906, America was shaken by one of the greatest natural disasters in its history. An earthquake, lasting only a minute, destroyed the city of San Francisco.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Shaw, *Global Awakening: How 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 9.

Throughout the book, he describes the many revivals that occurred around the world during the twentieth century. He summarizes the main idea of his book, saying, “Yet one earthquake has passed unnoticed by ... and a host of historians. It was a cultural and spiritual earthquake whose oddity in the modern world was as remarkable as it was important. I refer to the resurgence of Christianity around the world.”<sup>2</sup> Shaw highlights the Global South revivals in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Rosell’s *The Surprising Work of God* focuses on a thirty-five-year period from 1950 to 1985. He describes this period as an Evangelical revival in America. Though the focus is not on the Global South, he connects it as a part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals that have occurred around the world.

Both Rosell and Shaw quote the contemporary historian, Philip Jenkins. Jenkins may be the most well-known current historian today writing on the explosive growth of Christianity in the Global South. His two books, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, are the standards on reporting this amazing phenomenon. Though Rosell focuses on the United States, he considers the evangelical revival to be a part of the revivals occurring in the Global South. “The same movement toward the Global South, as those regions have come to be called, can be charted within the evangelical movement itself.”<sup>3</sup>

In Scott Sunquist’s *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory*, he looks at missions from historical and theological perspectives, covering the history of missions from the early church to the present. Whereas several of the above writers focused on revivals of the past 100 years, Sunquist looks at this period more from

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<sup>2</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw, *Global Awakening*, 14.

a general geopolitical and religious perspective. He also looks at the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church, rather than just the Protestant Church.

The second half of his book focuses on a theology of mission, providing a missiology textbook. He covers Pentecostalism of the last one hundred years quite well, but does not call it revival as others do.

John Piper's *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* is another outstanding book that references this phenomenon. He writes, "At the beginning of the twentieth century, Europeans dominated the world church, with approximately 70.6 per cent of the world's Christian population. Yet, by the end of the century, the European percentage of world Christianity had shrunk to 28 percent of the total; Latin America and Africa combined provided 43 percent of the world's Christians."<sup>4</sup> Piper also quotes historian Mark Noll, "The Christian church has experienced a larger geographical redistribution in the past fifty years than in any comparable period in history, with the exception of the very earliest years of church history."<sup>5</sup> While giving much to rejoice about, the demand for Scripture far outstrips what the Church is providing for these baby Christians. This tremendous growth actually helps create the Bible gap problem.

After defining these terms, I highlighted some of the major Bible ministries that are addressing the problem. My best sources for this were their websites and any articles written about the ministries.

When most people think of Scripture, or the term Bible, they think of a bound volume containing the books of the Bible. However, Scripture has taken on new forms in

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<sup>4</sup> John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 16.

<sup>5</sup> Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 18.

recent years such as audio, video and digital formats. These new formats have expanded the Church's outreach and impact with the Word of God. There are ministries today that work exclusively with developing and distributing audio Scripture. In addition, since the internet has revolutionized our world, digital platforms have been developed to distribute the Word. These new methods are able to take the Word of God where missionaries cannot go. The digital age has potentially become as impactful to our age as the Gutenberg Printing Press was over 500 years ago.

Chapter two of my thesis-project is the Theological Framework chapter. There are many great books written on the Word of God. Many of them will be in my bibliography. However, it was not my intent to do an exhaustive study on the theology of the Word of God. I had to stay on my specific topic of the Bible Gap. So there were a series of questions I sought to answer concerning God's Word that relate to understanding the problem of the Gap and how to close it.

### The Word of God

Asking, "What is meant by the word *Scripture*," and, "What is meant by the term *Bible*," led to the question, "What is the nature of the Word of God?" insight from John Frame's *The Doctrine of the Word of God* provides tremendous insight on this theme. He takes over 600 pages to describe aspects of the Word of God that many may not consider.

As all good theologians, Dr. Frame challenges us to think wider and deeper about the subject. Because of this, it helped me to answer the next question, "Why is the Bible important to the church?" Without being able to answer these questions, the problem of the Bible Gap would have no value.



There were two other, older books that were also valuable in this section, but to a lesser degree. They were Edward Young's *Thy Word Is Truth*, and John Warwick Montgomery's *God's Inerrant Word*. They both wrote primarily on the inerrancy of Scripture. It was not in the purpose of this thesis-project to define or argue for inerrancy, it was a presupposition for the thesis.

Chapter 2 also sought to answer, "How did Jesus view the Old Testament," and, "How did the apostles view Scripture." John Wenham's *Christ and The Bible* was extremely helpful. There are many differing opinions today in the Church regarding the Bible, and many place great value on New Testament Scripture for today's church. However, they often de-emphasize the value of Old Testament Scripture for the Church, as if Genesis through Malachi is only for Jews and of little value for Christians. However, a clear picture of the value Jesus and the Apostles placed on Old Testament Scripture should change this.

These four books covered very different aspects of the theology of the Word of God, but all four confirmed the extreme importance the Bible has for human beings and the Church. This was important to establish, Otherwise, the proposed problem regarding the Bible Gap would have little significance.

### Church History

While a chapter on Church history wasn't necessary, it was important. The Church is 2,000 years old, and surely, Church history could confirm or deny this problem. In looking at the value Scripture and the Bible played in the history of

Christianity and the world itself, this only confirmed the importance of the issue this thesis-project presents.

Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity* is a classic. However, since it is an overview of two millennia, it leaves out a lot of the details.

W. Kenneth Connolly's *The Indestructible Book* focused on an aspect of Church history relevant to this thesis, evident by its subtitle, *The Bible, Its Translators, and Their Sacrifices*. It demonstrated how the Bible played an important part in shaping both the Church and the world.

Connolly starts with the **Early Christian** period, and explains the Bible of Jesus and the Apostles in detail. Of course, it was the Old Testament Scriptures. In doing so, he takes the reader back to the development of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He shows the importance of the Scriptures to the Early Church. From here, he takes the reader to the development of the Latin Vulgate.

Connolly does an outstanding job detailing the Bible's impact upon two other eras of history; the **Middle Ages** and the **Protestant Reformation**. Connolly also does a great job relating both the main characters of the Reformation to the translation and distribution of Scripture, even detailing lesser known characters. He goes as far as to devote three chapters to the English Reformation. When most people think of the Reformation, they think only of Luther and Calvin. Yet, the impact of such men as Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Knox upon England is profound. He references the many Bible translations that came from the English Reformation, and this movement helped to create the last era of Church history, the **Modern Missions Era**.

Latourette's book was particularly valuable for two eras, the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation. He was very good at keeping the main characters and movements of history in focus. One area he wrote about that others do not focus on is the Roman Catholic Church, providing an excellent contrast with the Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Church. He wrote extensively about the Roman Catholic Reformation, a counter-reformation to the Protestant Reformation. It tried to resist the new emphasis of Scripture access to the laity by holding staunchly to the teaching that the Catholic Church was the caretaker of the Word of God, and only the bishops should interpret Scripture.

The most pivotal period of church history was the Protestant Reformation. Probably, the most important single word to describe this period is "change." Perhaps the second most important word for this period is "Bible." The battle for the Bible was certainly the emphasis of this period.

### Global Missions

Scott Sunquist's *Understanding Christian Mission* attempts to cover the history of missions from the Middle Ages onward. However, Sunquist focuses most of his attention from 1482 to the present as he refers to this period as the "globalization of Christianity."<sup>6</sup>

David Bosch's *Transforming Mission* and Andrew Wall's *The Missionary Movement In Christian History* covered the entire 200 year period. They are especially valuable in how they point out the importance of Bible translation and Bible distribution. These two factors helped to propel the growth of Christianity around the world.

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<sup>6</sup> Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 25.

Bosch has a chapter titled, “Bible and Mission.”<sup>7</sup> In it, he calls the New Testament a “missionary document,” tying Scripture with mission. Andrew Walls has a chapter titled, “The Translation Principle in Christian History.”<sup>8</sup> In it, Walls relates the translation of Scripture with the incarnation in a very powerful way. He considers the translation of Scripture, which he considers to be the Word of God, to be a form of the incarnation of the Son of God. This gives it a whole new elevated value. He writes,

Translation is the art of the impossible. Exact transmission of meaning from one linguistic medium to another is continually hampered not only by structural and cultural difference; the words of the receptor language are pre-loaded, and the old cargo drags the new into areas uncharted in the source language. In the end the translator has simply to do his best and take risks in a high risk business. In the light of the frustrations inherent in the translation process, it is more astonishing that God chose translation as his mode of action for the salvation of humanity. Christian faith rests on a divine act of translation: “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Any confidence we have in the translatability of the Bible rests on that prior act of translation. There is a history of translation of the Bible because there was a translation of the Word into flesh.<sup>9</sup>

Robert Coleman’s *The Heart of The Gospel* devotes a chapter to show the tremendous impact the Bible had, and still has, upon evangelism and mission.<sup>10</sup> Too many quotes to mention could be referenced from this chapter, but this is a summary of the points of application for the reader:

1. Evangelism is the reason for the Bible.<sup>11</sup>
2. The Bible speaks to the deepest needs of the soul.<sup>12</sup>
3. The objective authority for the Gospel is the Bible.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 20.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Heart of The Gospel*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 39.

4. The Bible gives believers essential unity in doctrine and experience.<sup>14</sup>
5. We should approach Holy Scripture with the respect due its Author.<sup>15</sup>
6. The Bible calls for a response.<sup>16</sup>
7. The Bible becomes the instrument of all divine blessing.<sup>17</sup>
8. Persons who take the Scriptures to heart become evangelists of the Gospel.<sup>18</sup>

These points answer the question of whether the Bible is important to the Church.

If the Bible is important, the problem of solving the Bible Gap is important to solve as well.

Finally, Ralph Winter's classic, *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, devotes an entire chapter to the impact of the Bible on world evangelism. In fact, Winter chose to make it his opening chapter. The chapter is a reprint of an address given at a Missions Conference by John Stott titled, "The Bible in World Evangelism."

Stott makes four main points are worth noting as well. They also show the value of the Bible to the Church:

1. The Bible gives us the mandate for world evangelism.<sup>19</sup>
2. The Bible gives us the message for world evangelism.<sup>20</sup>
3. The Bible gives us the model for world evangelism.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 40.

<sup>14</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 42.

<sup>17</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> Coleman, *Heart of The Gospel*, 42.

<sup>19</sup> Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 6.

4. The Bible gives us the power for world evangelism.<sup>22</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Without a doubt, the importance of the Bible in the growth of Christianity around the world and, specifically, in the Global South, is a theme imbedded into many of the books that have been written in recent years. The common denominator of the Bible, Church Growth, and Revival is evident throughout Church history.

Finally, the explosive growth that Christianity has had in the Global South since 1900 appears to be another common thread found in many books relevant to this thesis. The cause of this phenomenon cannot be easily explained. In 1900, the center of Christianity was located in the northern hemisphere countries. The Global South was extremely poor, and it had few stable governments. Technologically, politically, and economically the Southern hemisphere was very disadvantaged. However, it did not seem to matter. It seems that these disadvantages became a magnet that drew the power of God to its point of need.

Mark Shaw's *Global Awakening* devotes attention to this amazing shift of the Christian faith from the North to the South since about 1906. His explanation for this is not in human terms. He attributes it to a series of simultaneous revivals that began to occur around the world. This same theme is mentioned in many books by Christian historians and researchers such as Philip Jenkins, Todd Johnson, David Barrett, Lamin Sanneh, Donald Lewis, J. Edwin Orr, and Mark Noll. They seem to agree that only a supernatural, sovereign act of God could do this.

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<sup>22</sup> Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 8.

Philip Jenkins wrote two books that were extremely helpful. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* bring these themes to the forefront and tie them together as a powerful force.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### **Introduction**

Chapter one stated that there is a very serious problem taking place in the Global South that affects the finishing of the Great Commission. Some refer to this problem in broad terms as the “Worldwide Bible Gap” or “Bible Poverty.”

This thesis-project addresses a very specific part of this broad problem, being broken into three main parts; translation, access, and engagement. Translation has received the most attention by the Church. Ministries such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, Pioneer Bible Translators and The Seed Company have done, and are doing a very admirable job of publicizing this problem to the Church. Ninety-five per cent of the world’s population has some portion of Scripture translated into a language they understand. The goal of translation ministries is to translate Scripture into all remaining languages. A second goal is to provide a complete Bible for every language on earth.

This thesis-project focuses on access to Scripture, and, to be more specific, access to Scripture in the Global South.

This chapter includes a description of the surveys used. It includes the process of designing the surveys, the reasons for moving from one survey to a second survey. It takes the reader through the stages of preparation, execution, and the results, providing I some analysis from what was gained from the completed surveys. Finally, the project’s contribution to ministry is explored.



## **Preparation of the Project**

In the Summer of 2012, Bible League planned on having an international Conference, flying in our National Directors. It seemed that this would be a great opportunity to put together a survey and ask as many National Directors as would, to answer the questions.

Dr. Jeff Hale, Bible League's Chief Ministry Officer graciously approved the conducting of the survey. The survey had ten questions, with both closed and open-ended questions.<sup>1</sup>

The short nature of the questionnaire was intended to keep it simple and short, not wanting to burden the respondents. By keeping the survey short and simple, I hoped I would receive more surveys back. The National Directors were not required by Dr. Hale to fill out the survey; it was purely a volunteer request.

The first survey was completed and distributed prior to completing the required Research Methodology modules. In his consultation comments, Dr. Auday graciously addressed this, writing, "I realize that you have already completed the survey instruments and it is too late to make changes. Below, I briefly point out a few things that I would have suggested to improve some of the questions that you asked." He modified three of the ten questions. His suggestions definitely improved the survey. So, I decided to take his suggestions, and I designed a second survey to be sent out. The second survey was sent out four years after the first survey.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

## **Execution of the Project**

### **Surveys**

The first survey was presented to National Directors who attended the International Conference in October 2012. It was distributed to the indigenous national leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This was not the best of times in Bible League's history. There were a series of decisions that were made from February 2010, that affected the participation of the leaders with the survey. These decisions had a radical impact on the compensation and overhead funds these leaders would receive. Unfortunately, this information was revealed to them at the Conference, the same time they received the survey. Of 30 expected responses, only 15 were received.

Survey 2 was distributed in December 2016.<sup>2</sup> Lee Carter, our EVP of Ministry Operations, approved the distribution of the survey and sent out an email to the Executive Directors of the regions that I would be sending it to them. They then forwarded the survey to the indigenous field directors of whom they had oversight. Like the first survey, participation was purely voluntary. I received back surveys from 30 countries. This was double of the number received of Survey 1.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B.

## Results of the Project

### Survey Number (1)

Table 1. Question 1: Does every Christian in your country own a Bible?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	No	Haiti	No	Niger	No
Chile	No	India	No	Senegal	No
Columbia	No	Kenya	No	South Africa	No
El Salvador	No	Laos	No	Venezuela	No
Ghana	No	Mozambique	No	Zimbabwe	No

Question number one asks a very simple question. This may not seem very significant. However, if you asked this same question to someone in the United States you would probably not get the same answer.

Questions number two and three give insight into the reasons for why Christians in these countries do not own a Bible for their personal use.

Table 2. Question 2: If not, why?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	Cannot afford
Chile	Too expensive
Columbia	Poverty
El Salvador	Don't see the importance of the Bible
Ghana	High price, Illiteracy, Far distance to buy one
Haiti	Very expensive
India	Poor- cannot afford, Illiteracy, Small quantity printed
Kenya	Cost too high
Laos	Persecution
Mozambique	Poor- cannot afford
Niger	Cost too high, Illiteracy
Senegal	High price, Illiteracy, Small quantity printed
South Africa	Too expensive
Venezuela	Very expensive
Zimbabwe	High price, Poverty

Table 3. Question 3: What are the reasons and/or problems for the above answers?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	High profit motive of those who sell, High cost
Chile	Cost of a Bible is high, Those who provide Bibles are Commercial ventures.
Columbia	Distribution is based on a desire to make money, so the cost of a Bible is quite high.
El Salvador	They give little importance to the Bible
Ghana	Poverty
Haiti	No Response
India	Many are given a New Testament rather than a Bible because they are cheaper and more available.
Kenya	Bible costs more than most can afford.
Laos	Persecution and pressure from the government
Mozambique	Poverty and Illiteracy
Niger	Poverty and Illiteracy
Senegal	High cost of Bibles and Illiteracy
South Africa	Most Christians are in rural areas and live in poverty
Venezuela	Those who sell Bibles do so to make a profit
Zimbabwe	The problem is poverty

I purposely recorded the responses that I received in the surveys verbatim because I wanted to allow the Christian leaders to speak for themselves. I wanted to allow their reasons, words, and emotions to come through to the reader.

For the most part, there are common problems, struggles, and frustrations that Christians face in these countries of the Global South. The first is poverty. In the midst of their poverty, the cost for a Bible is more than most can afford. Second, there is a frustration that many have. They feel like those who sell Bibles are taking advantage of them. In many cases, the cost of a Bible is a week's wage.

In most of these countries, it is the Bible Society that owns the Bible copyright. The cost of a Bible to the consumer is normally somewhere between \$4.00-\$8.00. There is a tension that exists between those who have the Bibles, and those who want a Bible. The Bible Society needs to make a profit in order to continue their work of translation and distribution. However, the consumers in many Global South countries do not feel they can afford the price requested. Thus, the tension exists. Unfortunately, millions of Christians in the Global South go without the personal ownership of a Bible.

For example, in Haiti, the Bible Society charges \$8.00 for a Bible. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, and most people cannot afford to purchase a Bible. For the most part, only when a ministry is able to purchase the Bible from the Bible Society and give the Bible free of charge to a Haitian, can a person ever own a Bible for their personal use.

A third problem observed in the survey answers, although to a lesser degree, is illiteracy. This is a common problem in the Global South, and it affects Christians. Audio Bibles can be a solution, but usually costs four times that of a printed Bible.

Questions four, five, and six look at the Bible Gap from a slightly different angle. The problem of the Bible Gap is a distribution problem, but also a translation problem. The translation aspect of the problem affects about 5 percent of the population of the Global South.

Table 4. Question 4: Are there people groups or language groups in your country that do not have access to the New Testament or the whole Bible?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	Yes
Chile	Yes
Columbia	Yes
El Salvador	Yes
Ghana	Yes
Haiti	No- everyone speaks the same language
India	Yes
Kenya	Yes
Laos	Yes
Mozambique	Yes
Niger	Yes
Senegal	Yes
South Africa	Yes
Venezuela	No- everyone speaks and reads Spanish
Zimbabwe	Yes

Question five is a follow-up question to question number four. It asks for the names of people groups and language groups that do not have access to Scripture in their country. The answers revealed the existence of hundreds of languages. In India alone, there are 1600 languages. They may be minority languages, but they still represent at least 165 million people, and probably more. Hundreds of languages still do not have a full New Testament or Bible translated for use.

Table 5. Question 6: Can these people groups read another language? Is this sufficient?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	Yes- Khmer is our national language
Chile	Yes- if they are bilingual. If so, they can read Spanish
Columbia	Some are bilingual and therefore can also read Spanish
El Salvador	No Response
Ghana	Some in the cities can read the Asante Bible. Those in the rural areas cannot.
Haiti	No- all read our national language
India	Of the 1600 languages, many groups only read or speak their heart language. Many do not regularly use a national language, especially in rural areas.
Kenya	Some can. Many cannot, especially in rural areas.
Laos	No Response
Mozambique	Some can, but many can only read their heart language.
Niger	Yes, but heart language is best.
Senegal	Yes, but heart language is always best.
South Africa	Yes- they can read the Afrikaans Bible, but this is not sufficient.
Venezuela	Yes- Spanish
Zimbabwe	No

Questions seven and eight address questions related to non-Christians in their countries. It is clear millions of non-Christians live in the Global South who desire a Bible for personal use, but cannot access one.

In addition, to finding out if non-Christians had an interest in obtaining a Bible. I also wanted to find out if they faced similar challenges of obtaining one. Table 7 and Table 8 provide those answers.



Table 6. Question 7: Are there non-Christians in your country who want a Bible, but cannot obtain one?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	No	Haiti	Yes	Niger	Yes
Chile	No	India	Yes	Senegal	Yes
Columbia	Yes	Kenya	Yes	South Africa	Yes
El Salvador	Yes	Laos	Yes	Venezuela	Yes
Ghana	No	Mozambique	Yes	Zimbabwe	Yes

Table 7. Question 8: If so, why can they not access one?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	N/A
Chile	Because of the cost or unaware of places they can obtain one.
Columbia	Due to the cost, especially among the poor
El Salvador	Due to financial resources
Ghana	Major factor is the price for the Bible; Lack in the remote locations
Haiti	Expensive; and the door does not open to them.
India	Many live in villages (not available); Illiteracy
Kenya	No Response
Laos	No Response
Mozambique	Poverty
Niger	Cost of Bible; poverty of people
Senegal	Muslim pressure against Bible
South Africa	Scarcity of Bibles in the rural community
Venezuela	They are very costly
Zimbabwe	The price is too high

A comparison of the answers given regarding non-Christians and Christians in their ability to obtain a Bible reveals both complain about the “high cost” of Bibles in the context of great poverty.

Bibles are more accessible in the cities as compared to rural areas. Persecution, whether it comes from Hindus or Muslims, affects both Christians and non-Christians in their ability to obtain a Bible.

Question nine is a similar question, but phrased in a different way. It asked if there were certain languages translated, but in which the number of Bibles in that language was limited beyond the demand? This resulted in a number of important languages that people read, but do not have access to enough Bibles in. In other words, the demand is higher than the supply.

Table 8. Question 9: Is there a shortage of accessible, affordable Bibles in your country?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	Yes- Charrus
Chile	Yes- native languages such as Mapudungun
Columbia	Yes- Spanish
El Salvador	N/A
Ghana	Yes- Asante Tui
Haiti	Yes- Creole
India	Yes- Due to the monopoly of the Bible Society. It prints Bibles according to budget, not according to the need. Even major languages are printed in limited supply.
Kenya	Yes- Borana
Laos	No Response
Mozambique	Yes- Tsonga, Tswa, and Chichewa
Niger	Yes- Gourmatche. The Bible Society has translated the Bible, but have not printed very many. Thousands are waiting for a Bible.
Senegal	Yes- Wooloof, need more Bibles.
South Africa	Yes- Vezda, Zulu, South Sorco, and North Sorco
Venezuela	Yes- Spanish
Zimbabwe	Yes- Showa, English, and Endebele

This question was answered with a unanimous “Yes.” These are just some of the languages that have Scripture translated, but there are not enough available Bibles to meet the demand. This problem presents a constant challenge and frustration to Christian leaders.

Finally, question 10 sums up the purpose for which the Word of God is needed. God’s Word builds up the Body of Christ, spiritually and numerically. The simple answer seemed to be obvious, but it was important to hear it in the words of those who lived and labored in these countries.

Table 9. Question 10: If God's Word was more available, do you think this would have an effect upon the growth of Christianity in your country?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cambodia	Yes- absolutely!
Chile	Yes- the Word of God acts on people; converting them and changing them. Results: more Christians!
Columbia	Yes- Once people have the Bible, we tend to see a notable growth in the Christian population.
El Salvador	Definitely yes
Ghana	There can never be church growth without the Word of God. The only word that has the power to change and give man life is the Word of God. And, for any person to grow to be spiritual can only happen with and through the Word of God (Bible).
Haiti	I think if God's Word was more available, we would have another Haiti
India	Surely- There is an unending search for truth in India. The Bible is the answer.
Kenya	Yes
Laos	Yes
Mozambique	Yes, not only a growth of Christianity, but for the well-being of the people and God's Kingdom.
Niger	Yes- When we have a famine of the Word of God, the church suffers.
Senegal	Yes- More Bibles will result in more churches.
South Africa	Very much! The impact would be so great.
Venezuela	Yes, the Word of God gives principles and values to the country. This positively transforms.
Zimbabwe	Yes, very much so.

## Survey Number (2)

Questions 1, 2, and 3 of Survey Number (2) capture a wealth of data concerning the Bible Gap problem in the Global South. The answers provided came four years after the similar questions posed in Survey Number (1). The concluding section of this chapter compares the two. At first glance, the situation has not improved.

Questions 1 through 3 should be analyzed together. Question 1 from Survey Number (1) asked the question as a simple yes/no inquiry. Question 1 from Survey Number (2) asked the same question looking for an answer as a percentage. The follow-up questions gain the information for why the data from Question 1 is believed to be true by the responder.

The reader will notice an asterisk next to several countries listed in Survey Number Two. It is because they are not listed as countries located in the Global South. When this survey was sent out, leaders from countries Bible League is working in, provided their results. I thought it would be valuable to include their answers.

Table 10. Question 1: What proportion of Christians in your country/countries own a Bible? Please list country and estimated percentage.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	60%
Armenia	No statistics
Bangladesh	20%
Cambodia	80%
Chile	50%
China	65% in Government approved Three Self Church. Smaller percentage in Unregistered House Church. Higher percentage in the cities than in the rural areas.
Ethiopia	Of the 45 million Coptic and Catholic Christians only 500,000 have a Bible (1%). Of the 20 million Protestant Christians, 4 million have a Bible (20%).
Ghana	45%
Greece *	30%
India	80% in Urban areas and 25% in rural areas.
Kenya	40%
Kosovo *	45%
Macedonia *	1%
Madagascar	1%
Malaysia	90%
Montenegro*	7%
Mozambique	1.5%
Nepal	Very small percentage
Peru	80%
Philippines	15 million Christians have no Bible. The Church grows about 5% per year. Thus, there is a need for 1 million extra Bibles per year.
Russia *	Of the small percentage of people who practice Christianity, only a small percentage read a Bible.
Rwanda	12%- Over 4 million no Bible
South Africa	40%
Taiwan *	90%
Uganda	20%- It is estimated that there are over 27 million Christians which means there are over 21 million who have no Bible.
Ukraine	Most Christians belong to the Orthodox Church. Of the percent that own a Bible, only a small percent actually read it.
Venezuela	50%
Vietnam	No percentage given- 100,000 from Tribal groups have no Bible.
Zambia	1.5%
Zimbabwe	1.5% <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Countries with an asterisk behind their names are not located in the Global South

The way the first question from Survey (2) was phrased gave more detail than question number one from Survey (1). Along with the percentage given, an explanation was sometimes provided, which provided more insight. Again, in Survey (2) the exact wording of the responders provides the flavor and intensity of those who provided their insights.

Having received completed surveys from 30 countries on Survey (2), twice the response from Survey (1), reflects a difference in how the national leaders are feeling today about their ministry at Bible League, as compared to the culture of Bible League four years prior.

The concluding section of Chapter Five elaborates on the insights that can be gleaned from this question, as well as question number two and three.

Table 11. Question 2: Could you rank-order the top reasons for not owning a Bible?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Weak Infrastructure/Distribution Channels, Poverty, Orthodox Church does not promote Bible reading.
Armenia	Orthodox Church does not promote Bible reading, Poverty
Bangladesh	Poverty, Illiteracy, Poor Distribution Channels
Cambodia	Poverty, Not enough Bibles available
Chile	Financial hardship, Too expensive
China	Poverty in rural areas, Persecution, Distribution problems, Illiteracy
Ethiopia	Poverty- Cannot afford, Growth of Church through evangelism increases the need. Limited number of Bibles due to Weak Distribution.
Ghana	Poverty, Sparsely available due to poor network distribution
Greece	Greek Orthodox Church does not promote Bible reading
India	Poverty, Bible is only translated in 10% of existing languages, Illiteracy, Persecution
Kenya	Poverty, Growth of Church exceeds Bibles that are available
Kosovo	Weak distribution channels, Poverty, Persecution
Macedonia	Weak distribution channels, Poverty
Madagascar	Poverty, Difficult to transport through the jungles
Malaysia	Not enough available, Government restrictions, Poverty
Montenegro	Persecution, Poverty
Mozambique	Poverty, Poor distribution
Nepal	Poverty, Very little distribution outside of Capital city, Poor roads
Peru	Bibles are very expensive, Little supply of Bibles, Little encouragement for people to read
Philippines	Poverty, Distribution, Growth of Church outpaces the supply of Bibles
Russia	Russian Orthodox Church does not promote Bible, Poverty
Rwanda	Poverty, Poor distribution networks
South Africa	Poverty in rural areas, Weak distribution channels
Taiwan	No Response provided
Uganda	Poverty, Growth of Church exceeds available Bibles, Limited availability due to weak distribution network in country
Ukraine	Poverty
Venezuela	Financial hardship
Vietnam	Poverty, Persecution
Zambia	Poverty
Zimbabwe	Poverty



Table 12. Question 3: What are the reasons and/or problems for the answers given in  
Question number 2?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Islamic pressure, Low income, High price of Bibles
Armenia	Poverty, Cost of Bibles
Bangladesh	Christians are a minority people in an Islamic society. They are also the least educated. Therefore, they suffer great financial hardship. The average daily income is \$2.50 per day. The cost of a Bible far exceeds a family disposable income. Also, persecution against Christians in this radical country makes the Bible not very accessible.
Cambodia	The current impasse on the copyright issue of the Khmer Hammond Version (KHV) between the Bible Society and the Cambodian Christian Protestant Community Church has resulted in the shortage of Bibles for distribution and placement.
Chile	The majority of Evangelicals in Chile are Pentecostals. They are generally of the lower socioeconomic class. The Bible is copyrighted by the Bible Society, and they have no need to produce a more affordable Bible.
China	Poverty in the rural areas, Illiteracy
Ethiopia	Poverty, Growth of Church through evangelism increases need.
Ghana	Poverty, No availability due to poor network distribution
Greece	Pressure from Orthodox Christianity
India	The poor have no access to Bibles, mainly due to unavailability of translations. The Bible Society is the major Bible printing organization in India. They are not able to print more than their yearly goal. The goal is often less than the need. Also, India is becoming more intolerant of Christianity. Therefore, distribution is more difficult and risky.
Kenya	Poverty, It is difficult to keep up with the demand for Bibles because of the growth of the Church.
Kosovo	Islamic pressure, Long distances for distribution
Macedonia	Nominal Christianity
Madagascar	Poverty, Difficulty of transportation of Bibles throughout the country
Malaysia	The Federal Government has issued a ban on the use of the “Allah” word for Malay Bibles and Iban tribal language Bible. This has resulted in a shortage of Bibles in the country. Tribal areas struggle with poverty
Montenegro	Nominal Christianity, Low income, High cost
Mozambique	Poverty, Low income
Nepal	People do not have employment, or if they do, it is low income; There is no road access to villages to get Scriptures to the people.
Peru	High cost, Little supply
Philippines	Growth of the Church increases the demand for Bibles that cannot be met, Poverty
Russia	Poverty, The language of the Synodal Bible is antiquated and difficult to understand.
Rwanda	Poverty

South Africa	Poverty in the rural areas
Taiwan	No response
Uganda	Poverty, Weak distribution network
Ukraine	Poverty
Venezuela	Venezuela currently has an inflation rate of over 900%. The majority of the population only has enough money to buy food and other basic necessities. Purchasing a Bible would cost more than a week's salary.
Vietnam	Persecution, Poverty
Zambia	Poverty, High cost of Bibles
Zimbabwe	Poverty, Poor economic structure

There is much to learn from Tables 11, 12, and 13.

Table 13. Question 4: Are there language groups in your country that do not have access to the New Testament or the whole Bible?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	No Response
Armenia	No
Bangladesh	Yes
Cambodia	No
Chile	Yes
China	No
Ethiopia	Yes
Ghana	Yes
Greece	No
India	Yes, especially the whole Bible. Many language groups have a New Testament, but not a full Bible. This is a challenge since we have 1600 languages.
Kenya	Yes
Kosovo	No Response
Macedonia	No Response
Madagascar	Yes
Malaysia	No
Montenegro	No Response
Mozambique	Yes
Nepal	No- There are 122 dialects, but most of the read Nepali. Some organizations translate in different dialects, but all understand Nepali.
Peru	Yes- Almost all native languages have the New Testament. The complete Bible is only available in two languages; Quechua in Cusco and Quechua in Ayacucho.
Philippines	Yes
Russia	Yes
Rwanda	Yes
South Africa	Yes
Taiwan	No
Uganda	Yes
Ukraine	Yes
Venezuela	No
Vietnam	Yes
Zambia	Yes
Zimbabwe	Yes

Table 14. Question 5: If so, which languages?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	No Response
Armenia	No Response
Bangladesh	Marmas, Tripuri, Tanchangya, Mros, Jaintia, Manipuri, Munda, Chak
Cambodia	N/A
Chile	Rapa Nui and Mapuches
China	N/A
Ethiopia	No Response
Ghana	Brong
Greece	N/A
India	Too many to mention of the 1600 languages
Kenya	No Response
Kosovo	No Response
Macedonia	No Response
Madagascar	No Response
Malaysia	N/A
Montenegro	No Response
Mozambique	No Response
Nepal	N/A
Peru	Quechua de Corongo, Kichwa, Quechua de Sihuas, Yora
Philippines	No Response
Russia	Many of the minority languages such as Crimean Tatars, Entsi, Chulimitsi, Lankiytsi, Tofalari, Tindali, Nganasani, Undini, Nivkhi, Shortsi, Tsakhuri, Tabasarani, and Gypsies.
Rwanda	No Response
South Africa	No Response
Taiwan	N/A
Uganda	No Response
Ukraine	Gagauzi, Gypsies, Krimski Tatari
Venezuela	N/A
Vietnam	Tribal languages
Zambia	No Response
Zimbabwe	No Response

Tables 13 and 14 ask questions related to translation problems in the Global South. Eighteen of the thirty countries answered affirmatively that there are languages spoken and read in their respective countries that do not have Scripture translated in the

heart language of some of the people. The rest of the countries provided an answer of either no, or provided no response at all.

Certain countries have only one language that is both read and spoken. The fact that there were a lot of “No Response” is due to the factor that many of the leaders either did not know the answer to the question, or they did not know all the languages still needing Bible translation. There are still over 2,000 languages worldwide that do not have a full Bible translated. These languages are referred to as minority languages by linguists. This is a big challenge in the Global South. However, for the purpose of this thesis project, it is not the primary focus of the Bible Gap that is being addressed.

Many people who speak or read a minority language also speak and read other languages. Many times, in a country, there are one or more languages that are referred to as a national language. For instance, in the United States, many languages are read and spoken. Yet, English is the national language. India has five national languages, but they also have over 1600 minority languages. Some people refer to minority languages as heart languages.

Table 15 looks at the question of whether readers of minority languages also have access to a national language Bible? This is becoming more common because more rural people are moving to the cities of our world.

Table 15. Question 6: Can these people read another language? Is this sufficient?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Yes, Yes
Armenia	No Response
Bangladesh	Some of the better educated indigenous Christians can read and write Bengali. So they can read the Bengali Bible. However, this is only 5% of the indigenous population.
Cambodia	N/A
Chile	Yes, the majority of the people are bi-lingual speaking their native language and Spanish.
China	N/A
Ethiopia	Yes, Yes
Ghana	Yes, Yes
Greece	N/A
India	No, although Hindi is the national language, many can understand only their regional language or dialect. This complicates the task of reaching the huge population of India with God's Word.
Kenya	Yes, usually sufficient
Kosovo	Yes, Yes
Macedonia	Yes, Yes
Madagascar	Yes, Yes
Malaysia	N/A
Montenegro	Yes, Yes
Mozambique	Yes, Yes
Nepal	Yes, all education is based on the Nepali language. So all language groups can read the Nepali Bible. However, some minority languages are being translated.
Peru	Yes. The majority of people are bi-lingual.
Philippines	Yes, Yes
Russia	Yes, Russian. However, the heart language is always more impactful and culturally relevant.
Rwanda	No Response
South Africa	Yes, Yes
Taiwan	N/A
Uganda	Yes, Yes
Ukraine	Yes, Russian and Ukrainian. However, the heart language is always more impactful and culturally relevant.
Venezuela	Yes, Yes
Vietnam	Yes, most often
Zambia	Yes, Yes
Zimbabwe	Yes, Yes

Tables 13-15 relate to language groups that do not have access to the Bible, yet. However, the tables show that the majority can read more than one language. The majority of those who read a minority language, often called a heart language, can also read a national language.

This does not necessarily meet the need of those who are either too poor to afford a Bible, or who do not have access due to poor roads, lack of accessibility because of too few Bibles being printed, and the other problems that keep God's Word from those who so passionately desire to have a copy.

Tables 16 and 17 explore the desire for Scripture that non-Christians may have. Christians want access to God's Word; however, do those who do not know the Lord desire access for a Bible to read?

Table 16. Question 7: Are there non-Christians in your country who want a Bible, but cannot access one?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Yes
Armenia	No Response
Bangladesh	Yes, there are many Hindu and Muslim people who are very curious about the Bible. However, for various reasons they cannot access one.
Cambodia	No
Chile	Yes
China	Not generally
Ethiopia	Yes
Ghana	Yes
Greece	Yes
India	Yes, rural non-Christians
Kenya	Yes
Kosovo	Yes
Macedonia	Yes
Madagascar	Yes
Malaysia	No
Montenegro	Yes
Mozambique	Yes
Nepal	Very few
Peru	Yes
Philippines	Yes
Russia	Yes
Rwanda	Yes
South Africa	Yes
Taiwan	Not normally
Uganda	Yes
Ukraine	Yes
Venezuela	Due to the current political situation, the majority of the non-Christian population would like to acquire a Bible.
Vietnam	No Response
Zambia	Yes
Zimbabwe	Yes



Table 17. Question 8: If so, what are the reasons for them to not be able to access one (Bible)?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Islamic indoctrination and pressure against the Bible
Armenia	No Response
Bangladesh	Persecution from family members; the other reason is the lack of affordability and the lack of availability.
Cambodia	N/A
Chile	Lack of strategic distribution, High costs
China	N/A
Ethiopia	Poverty and high cost of Bibles
Ghana	High price, poverty
Greece	Inhibitor opinion of Orthodox against Evangelicals
India	Unavailability of Bibles in Regional dialects
Kenya	Poverty
Kosovo	High price, pressure from the Orthodox Church against the Bible
Macedonia	Opinion of the Orthodox and Muslim religion against it; the Bible price
Madagascar	Poverty and the difficulty of transportation
Malaysia	N/A
Montenegro	Pressure from the Orthodox Church against it.
Mozambique	Poverty and cost
Nepal	The Bible is only available in a few bookstores in Kathmandu. Or if a Christian gives one to a non-Christian.
Peru	Cost of the Bibles
Philippines	No Response
Russia	Poverty, especially for the older generations who cannot afford a Bible. Strong pressure against Evangelicals, persecution.
Rwanda	Poverty and lack of availability
South Africa	Poverty and lack of access in the rural areas
Taiwan	N/A
Uganda	Poor distribution throughout country, and poverty
Ukraine	Poverty, especially among the older generation who cannot afford a Bible.
Venezuela	There are no Bibles being printed or being imported for sale now. The current stock of Bibles in the country has plummeted. Bible League is the only ministry providing Bibles at no cost.
Vietnam	No Response
Zambia	Poverty
Zimbabwe	Poverty

The reasons given for why a Christian or a non-Christian cannot access a Bible in the countries of the Global South run parallel to each other. The fact that non-Christians desire to read a Bible, if given the chance, makes the importance of providing them even more imperative. More analysis appears in the final chapter.

Table 18. Question 9: What proportion of Christians in your country use either audio or digital formats of the Bible? Please list estimated percentage for each format.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	About 10% use digital formats
Armenia	Digital is between 8% and 10%
Bangladesh	Because of poverty, we estimate that that only 2% use audio or Bible apps. It is the same foe video or other digital formats.
Cambodia	Limited audio format is available. 10% for digital
Chile	New generations prefer digital Bibles. It is estimated that 50% of the Evangelical youth use a digital Bible. Audio is less than 10%.
China	Digital Chinese Bible is not commonly used. Electronic audio Bible is more common among those who are illiterate or aged. The mp3 player comes loaded with not only the Bible, but also hymns and sermons. However, it is quite expensive, about 5 times of a printed Bible.
Ethiopia	No Response
Ghana	Digital is about 30% of the youth.
Greece	No Response
India	The educated urban Christians use audio and digital formats of the Bible- Mobile apps (60%), Audio (50%), Kindle (20%). The poor rural Christians use these formats minimally.
Kenya	No Response
Kosovo	No Response
Macedonia	No Response
Madagascar	Some audio
Malaysia	5% Audio, 25% Digital
Montenegro	No Response
Mozambique	No Response
Nepal	Some audio Bible is available for those who do not read
Peru	Audio- 10% of the Christian population; Digital- 30%-40%, primarily among youth.
Philippines	No Response
Russia	Audio 15% to 20%, Digital is 35% to 40%
Rwanda	No Response
South Africa	No Response
Taiwan	Digital- high percentage of youth
Uganda	No Response
Ukraine	Audio 20%-25%, Digital 40%
Venezuela	Digital 30%, Audio 10%
Vietnam	No Response
Zambia	No Response
Zimbabwe	No Response

There is great enthusiasm among Bible ministries for the prospect of Digital formats. Some are even calling this, “the New Gutenberg Press.” In looking at the statistical use of digital and audio in the Global South, it is still rather minimal. Digital is more popular than audio Scripture. Audio is used more among those who cannot read, or who come from oral cultures. Digital formats of the Bible are catching on among youth, but not so much among the general population in the Global South. However, over time this should increase significantly.

The final question given in Survey Number 2 is the same given as the final question given in Survey Number 1. However, Survey Number 2 is administered four years later.

Table 19. Question 10: If Scripture was more available, do you think this would have an effect upon the growth of Christianity in your country? In what ways?

<b>Country</b>	<b>Response</b>
Albania	Yes, but only if it will go together with reading and studying the Bible
Armenia	Yes
Bangladesh	Bangladeshi people have a deep sense of spiritual awareness. They like to think and talk about God (or the gods). It is deep within our culture and even our national poets and writers. Many Muslims are interested and permitted to read the Bible.
Cambodia	Yes, evangelism and discipleship progress at a faster rate when Scripture and Scripture resources are available. Also, when these resources are available and are complemented with training this helps to equip local Christians and Churches to do ministry. This will result positively in the growth of Christianity.
Chile	Yes. A lower cost for Bibles could allow the Church to implement massive evangelism programs in our communities.
China	Yes
Ethiopia	Yes
Ghana	Yes
Greece	Yes
India	Yes. Bibles in the Regional dialects can help further the Gospel. Bibles

should be made available in print. For those who are illiterate, audio Bibles will help. When every believer owns their own Bible, they read and grow in the Lord. When they grow, they also share God's love with others. They are able to lead others to Christ and edify them. God's written word, the Bible is of paramount importance to penetrate the unreached pockets of the India population with the message of Jesus.

Kenya	Yes
Kosovo	Yes
Macedonia	Yes
Madagascar	Yes
Malaysia	Yes, evangelism and discipleship progress at a faster pace when Scripture and Scripture resources are able to be used. When training is added for the local Church, this speeds the growth of Christianity.
Montenegro	Yes
Mozambique	Yes, especially when a believer can help engage other with Scripture.
Nepal	Surely more availability of Scripture has an effect upon the growth of Christianity. When people share Jesus and His story people may become interested. But, when the Bible is not available their interest may decline.
Peru	The physical availability of a Bible is not sufficient for the growth of Christianity. We lack teachers to help others understand the Bible. The availability of Scripture, with the presence of a teacher who helps others to understand the Bible, are definite factors for the healthy growth of Christianity in Peru.
Philippines	Yes, of course.
Russia	Yes, but Church growth will only be achieved along with training and religious freedom.
Rwanda	Yes
South Africa	Yes
Taiwan	Yes
Uganda	Yes
Ukraine	Yes, but Church growth will only occur along with training.
Venezuela	Yes, placing the word of God in a printed, digital or audio format under the guidance of a trained believer will have a significant impact in leading a non-believer to Christ.
Vietnam	Yes
Zambia	Yes, but only when it is accompanied with someone trained to be able to explain to another the meaning of Jesus and his word.
Zimbabwe	Yes, but only if the availability to read and study the Bible like the BLI program.

## **The Project's Contribution to Ministry**

Several streams of research converged in this project of closing the Bible Gap in the Global South: Biblical Research, Church History Research, Missiological Research, and Current Field Research. The results identify certain key factors that resonate in each type of research focus.

First, the Bible, Scripture, and the Word of God all hold a place of prominence in the activity of Gospel ministry. No matter how you research this subject, it is clear that God does all things by the power of His Word.

Second, it is engagement with His Word that causes transformation of people, as well as His Church. The more that God's Word is made available to people and His Church, the greater the impact upon the Church and the world.

This seems so simple, but it is easy to miss. A contribution to ministry is that Scripture should be at the center of all ministry. Jesus always stays close to His Word. Actually, Jesus is the Word! If we are not preaching the Word of God, discipling with the Word of God, or church planting with the Word of God, we may do nice things for people, but it may provide no eternal benefit to them.

A third key factor contributing to ministry is that this thesis-project establishes a clear fact that a Bible gap exists in the Global South. Every country, 100 percent, surveyed confirmed this fact. The current field research shows a multitude of Christians have yet to obtain a Bible for themselves. This should not be. It is the Body of Christ's responsibility to do something about this problem.

Fourth, key reasons why this problem exists are revealed by the research. It is almost impossible to solve a problem until you know you have one. Now that the key reasons for the problem are revealed, the Church can begin to address them.

Fifth, communication, collaboration, and co-operation needs to occur between ministries, denominations, and mission agencies about solving this problem. One such group that could help immensely is the Forum for Bible Agencies (FOBA). They are a collaboration of Bible Agencies that meet at least twice a year to discuss how to promote the “Bible Cause.” In the past, their main focus has been on Bible translation. Recently, the topic of digital expansion of the Bible has been an important subject. Perhaps, the topic of the problem of Bible distribution/engagement could become a focus.

What makes this even more significant is that the United Bible Society, based in London, is a member of this group. They hold the majority of Bible copyrights in the Global South. Therefore, they dictate the cost of Scripture made available to the public.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

As mentioned earlier, the origins of this thesis-project began some thirty years ago with a mission trip to China. At the time, I had no awareness that I would engage in a Doctor of Ministry program related to what I saw in China. However, as the Lord led me to Bible League in 2006, this focus became clearer, but spread to many other countries.

Bible League's ministry is directed towards the under-resourced Church. Given the majority of the under-resourced Church are located in the Global South, practically everywhere we work we hear the same plea from the Church, "we need more Bibles."

This sounds very strange to the average American Christian because Bibles are everywhere. In every Christian bookstore in the United States, you can find an assortment of Bibles for sale in all price ranges. You can buy one, or a whole case, if you want. There seems to be no shortage of supply, and a price to fit any budget. Amazon and other online sellers make sure of that.

Yet, in the majority world, the Global South, this is not the case. For those who take the Great Commission of Jesus seriously, this fact should bother us. Does not every believer in Christ deserve to have access to a Bible? If Jesus desires that every disciple "continue in His Word," then would he not desire to provide those disciples with at least a New Testament? In fact, since Jesus views the Old Testament Scriptures to be God's Word, even down to the last "jot" and "tittle," it could be argued He would want each of His children to have a full Bible.



Chapter Six includes (1) evaluation of the thesis-project, (2) implications of the thesis-project, (3) outcomes from the thesis-project, (4) conclusions from the thesis-project, (5) recommendations for future study, and (6) final thoughts.

## **Evaluation of the Thesis-Project**

### **Keys to Project Effectiveness**

The use of a ten-question survey that included basic yes-no questions, open-ended questions, and follow-up questions proved effective for field research. It was important to hear from Christian leaders who live and work in the Global South. It would not have been as effective to go to the countries as an outsider and simply gather research by observation.

As has already been mentioned, the first survey only received a sampling of fifteen countries from the Global South. This was a weak response because surveys were distributed to over 30 countries. However, I am grateful that in the sovereignty of God, there was a delay in the completion of my Doctor of Ministry studies. I was able to compile a second survey with the help of Dr. Auday. The second survey received responses from thirty countries.

Therefore, the use of the second survey was a second key to effectiveness due to the much larger sampling of countries. It was a good cross-section of responses from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

It is interesting to note that key results from both surveys were identical. Both showed that 100 percent of countries surveyed agree that many Christians do not own a

Bible. Also, 80 percent of the countries surveyed show non-Christians in these countries desire a Bible, if they could obtain one. Third, 100 percent of countries from both surveys expressed that more access to Scripture would benefit the growth of Christianity.

A third key to effectiveness was the addition of an extra chapter of research, discussing church history, that is not regularly included in a Doctor of Ministry thesis-project. If the hypothesis was correct, it should be verified at different times in the history of the Church, ample evidence in each era of Church History confirmed the hypothesis.

### Keys to Project Improvement

This thesis-project is a first step of tackling the problem of the Bible Gap in the Global South. It would be wonderful to get a larger sampling of countries. It would also be helpful to receive information from more than one leader per country, possibly receiving some diversity of opinion, or additional information to help solve the problems.

Other improvements would be to visit each country to talk with leaders and delve deeper into the responses given. I would also like to talk with the Bible Society in each country who hold so many of the copyrights. It would be helpful to understand their views and perspective. Then, if we were able to engage indigenous leaders with the Bible Society in collaborative conversations, we could make great strides to solve this problem.

It has been suggested to me that perhaps an organization like the Pew Research Center could fund a grant over a multi-year period to research this subject. If this was done, a more thorough analysis could be provided.

## **Implications of the Thesis-Project**

The central value this thesis-project has had is to establish evidence that there is a big gap among Global South countries with providing the Bible to the Christian population that desire God's Word. It also provides evidence that we are not talking about a few, but millions of believers in Global South nations. For example, In Ethiopia, a nation of 94 million; of the 45 million Coptic and Catholic Christians, it is estimated that only about 500,000 own a Bible. Of the 20 million Protestant Christians, it is estimated that no more than 4 million own a copy of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> This same scenario is repeated over and over in the Global South.

The aspect of the Bible Gap related to the translation of Scripture in all languages has been researched in recent years. In fact, organizations like Wycliffe Bible Translators and others carry out on-going research to track their progress. Their goal is to finally reach every known language on earth with an on-going work of Scripture translation. From there, it is to eventually complete a full Bible translation in every known language.

However, what about the other 95 percent of the world's population that already have Scripture translated in their language? What about the 7 billion people who have Scripture translated for them, yet we are not providing them a copy for their personal enrichment? Why do we allow Church leaders around the world to cry out for more Bibles, and we do not respond? These are some of the questions this thesis-project has intended to ask and answer.

A second value the thesis-project helps to establish is the reminder that God chose to speak with definitive words. In fact, the biblical account tells us that God chose to

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<sup>1</sup> Bible League International. FY16 Project Ministry Ethiopia, 8/31/2015, p. 16.

write His Word on tablets of stone (Exodus 32:16). He could have written them in the sky. He could have had them announced by angels. Yet, God chose to give humankind His words in writing on a physical object (stone tablets) so that they could not be easily lost. Later, they were written on parchment, then scrolls, then finally in books that could be carried and used, over and over again.

This second point may not seem very important, or at least too obvious. However, much of the Church in the West has moved away from the Bible. The Barna Group, in their studies, *The State of the Church 2017* and *The Bible In America: 6-Year Trends* discovered some disturbing trends related to Bible engagement. Much of the Church would rather be entertained by a cool sermon with lots of visual effects than engage with Scripture for personal application. Studies show an increase of Bible illiteracy in the Global North.<sup>2</sup> This will affect our ministry to the Global South, and probably already has. The Church needs to get back to the Bible.

A further point related to this is that not only is Biblical illiteracy growing in the Global North, it is very prevalent in the Global South. This is due to the fact that so many believers in the Global South do not have the ability to learn the Word of God, because they do not have a copy of it. In their case, it is not their fault.

Another concern is related to the mission of the Church. In recent years, there has been a rise, especially among younger evangelicals, of focusing on alleviating poverty and social ills. Child sponsorship, digging wells, and alleviating hunger are all valuable

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<sup>2</sup> “The State of the Church 2016,” posted September 15, 2016, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016>.

demonstrations of God's love for those in the Global South.<sup>3</sup> However, without a person being introduced to Jesus, and coming to faith in Christ, they will be eternally lost. We are then to make disciples of these believers. We do this by engaging them with the Word of God. Jesus made this fact very clear. It is not enough to feel good, by doing nice things for those in the Global South. We must introduce them to a loving Heavenly Father who loved them so much, that He gave His only Son to die upon a cross for their sins. This can best be done through the Word of God. This is the **spiritual justice** issue of our time.<sup>4</sup>

A fourth implication is for the Church in the Global South, Mission Agencies, and Bible Societies to work in a more collaborative way. There are many problems with the distribution of Scripture that could be solved if these groups would sit down and talk. Unity for the sake of spreading the Gospel should be a high priority. How do we come together to make disciples? How do we work together to start disciple-making movements and church planting movements? Finally, how do we make sure every child of God has a Bible for themselves?

### **Outcomes of the Thesis-Project**

The first outcome of the thesis-project research is that it supports the idea that there is an immense Bible Gap in the Global South. It has moved from an idea that this is

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<sup>3</sup> I do not want to under emphasize the value of meeting the physical and social needs, commonly referred to as fulfilling the Great Commandment. Actually, combining the practice of fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission is the best method.

<sup>4</sup> The answers given to many of the questions in the Surveys point to the connection to poverty, and the lack of Scripture in the Global South.

something that I heard about from others, to having conclusive evidence from the data, that it is indeed a fact.

A second outcome is an understanding of the many reasons for the Gap. In order to solve any problem, you first have to be convinced that you have one. Second, you have to understand the reasons that are causing the problem to occur.

A third outcome, is not only do I understand the magnitude of the problem, but also the importance of solving it. This was not only revealed in the survey answers given, but in the other types of research done. In the theological framework chapter, the evidence demonstrated the importance and power of God's Word confirmed the importance of getting Scripture to everyone, especially God's people. It stressed the value for those who receive it and obey it. It also showed the peril for those who do not have it, or to those who do not apply it to their lives.

The literature review provided evidence that came from missiological writings to support the importance for doing the thesis-project on this subject. There was also much evidence revealed through the Church History Review chapter to confirm the importance of this subject. All types of research employed in the thesis-project point to the importance of this problem, and the need to solve it.

The final type of research I conducted was in conjunction with the vast amount of research that is regularly done at *The Center for the Study of Global Christianity* in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. The Center is located at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. It is the world's foremost academic research center that monitors demographic trends in Christianity. Most of this research was done on the *World Christian Database*.

I purposely put off consulting the Database until I finished all my other research. I did not want to be influenced by the Center's findings until I could complete my own research. After compiling and analyzing my personal research, I consulted the Database to see how it compared with what I had discovered. I discovered that it is all very similar in the findings. Appendix C includes data derived from the World Christian Database for the countries of the Global South. I want to thank two of the Research Associates at the Center, Bert Hickman and Peter Crossing. Peter was especially helpful in helping me extract and collate the data for the Global South.

In order to analyze how to interpret the data, several definitions need to be understood. The collected data on Scripture that is in the World Christian Database is determined by a formula developed in 1963 called the Hakone Formula. The United Bible Societies' (UBS) at the 17<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting and World Assembly held in Hakone, Japan established this formula as a way to gauge worldwide Scripture distribution.<sup>5</sup>

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity has adopted this system. It is the only system of monitoring Scripture distribution that has ever been formulated and tracked. When UBS formalized the Hakone Formula, it also set three goals which would be measured: 1) A Bible for every Christian home 2) At least a New Testament for every Christian 3) At least a Portion (usually one of four Gospels) for all who can read and for every literate.<sup>6</sup> These goals only applied to adults age 15 and above.

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<sup>5</sup> Todd Johnson, Kenneth Ross, Sandra Lee, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 302.

<sup>6</sup> David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD30-AD2200* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 641.

These goals excluded such groups as 700 million non-literate adult non-Christians, 100 million non-literate adult Christians, the 285 million visually impaired persons, the 328 million deaf, and the 1.9 billion children currently in the world.<sup>7</sup>

The World Christian Database also adopted certain assumptions that were used for the Hakone Formula. The assumptions are that both a Bible and a New Testament have a life-span of 20 years. The other assumption is that a Portion (usually a Gospel) will last 10 years.

There are many factors that come into play with how long a Scripture product will last. Some of these include the amount of use a Bible, New Testament, or Portion is used. Is it daily? Is it weekly? Is the Scripture a paperback, hardbound, or leather-bound? What type of glue and binding are used? How is the climate affecting the book?

Most Scriptures distributed in the Global South do not sit in an air-conditioned house. Most probably are not transported in an air-conditioned automobile. So, I question these Scripture life-span assumptions. I will write more about this in my “conclusion” section of this chapter.

## **Conclusions**

In Chapter One, I proposed what I refer to as a “Bible Gap” in the Global South. I stated on page two, “Currently, approximately 95 percent of the earth’s population have a Bible, New Testament, or one of the four Gospels in a language they can read and understand. This gives most people access to Scripture... The problem, is that although

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<sup>7</sup> Barrett and Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, 641.



Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels are translated and available; they are not getting to millions of believers and seekers who want them.”

Furthermore, in my introductory chapter, I proposed eleven questions regarding my topic. In this section, I offer some answers to these questions based on the research done for the thesis-project. The first question is the most important. *Is this really a problem?* Both sets of Surveys answer this question with a resounding **yes**.

*Do Bible Societies, Bible distribution ministries, and other Great Commission ministries agree that there is a Bible Gap problem?* These organizations view this issue in different ways. Often, they seem to be at odds with each other. In the Global South, the Bible Society usually holds the copyright to the text. Because they hold the legal copyright, they are able to control the printing of Scripture and the cost charged for a Bible or New Testament. Not only do they control the cost, they also control the number of Scriptures made available in each country. They consider this to be a sacred trust of protecting the purity of the translation. This stewardship is very important to the Bible Societies.

However, the Church in the Global South most often feels that the cost charged by the Bible Society is too costly for many to afford. This was clear from the answers given in the two surveys taken. In fact, in some countries, believers feel that a profit motive of the Bible Society takes a higher priority than a sincere desire to make God’s Word available for ministry.

Let me give an example here. In 2016, a ministry that works in Ethiopia requested to purchase 50,000 Amharic Bibles from the Bible Society. These Bibles were to be used in evangelism and church planting work. The Bible Society would only print 10,000.

When the mission organization offered to do the printing of more for the Bible Society, they were refused, and were told “that they would print more next year because they needed to do this to protect their revenue next year.”<sup>8</sup>

For Great Commission ministries working in these countries, this is a challenge. This particular ministry was only able to do 20 percent of the work that they were capable of doing because they could not get the Scriptures that were needed. Unfortunately, in Ethiopia, it is estimated that of 45 million Coptic and Catholic Christians, only 500,000 own a Bible for personal use. Of the 20 million Protestant Christians, only 4 million own a Bible. This leaves over 60 million Christians without a Bible. It does not take into account the non-Christians who would engage in God’s Word if given the chance. Unfortunately, this same scenario is repeated in country after country in the Global South. It is an injustice that needs to be fixed!

The Bible Society needs to make a profit in order to continue to do their work of translating languages and providing Scripture to the Church. However, the consumers, the national Church and Gospel ministries, need to be able to purchase Scripture so they can continue to evangelize and train the Church. Otherwise, the Church stays weak. People who could come to Christ if engaged with God’s Word stay lost. The Kingdom of God is hindered by those who should be expanding it.

Looking at this from purely a business perspective, the more Scripture that is available for evangelism and church planting, the more disciples will be added to the church. Thus, more Scripture begets the need for more Bibles. So, the Bible Societies’

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<sup>8</sup> A conversation relayed to me from a ministry director that he had with the Bible Society of Ethiopia.

market share would actually grow, and their profits would grow as well. This can be a win-win situation for everyone, especially the glory of God.

*If so, what are the causes of this problem?* The most prevalent problem given in the answers of the surveys is **poverty**. The second most prevalent problem is the **cost** of Scripture. The third reason is the **lack of Bibles** made available in the Global South. The cost for a Bible is usually between \$4 and \$8 per Bible. Because the average income in much of the Global South is \$1-\$2 a day, this makes it very difficult for a Christian to purchase a copy of God's living Word. The indigenous church in country that is seeking to evangelize and plant more churches is finding this to be a big challenge as well. They do not have the resources to provide the thousands upon thousands of new converts with a Bible. Thus, millions of believers are Bible-less in the Global South. There is a Bible famine in the Global South.

As for the missionary ministries that work in the Global South seeking to complete the Great Commission, they find this to be a great challenge as well. They have to pay for the New Testaments and Bibles to use for ministry. It is fair to pay, but sometimes the cost prohibits them from being able to provide the Bibles for all those who are asking for a copy. Also, when they can afford to pay, in many cases, the Bible Society will not print enough copies for what is needed.

*What does God think about the problem, as is written in Scripture?* There are more than 150 verses of Scripture that I looked at for this thesis-project. I will only reference a few here.

Proverbs 31:8-9 says, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Much is written today about justice issues. Usually, it relates to economic or social justice issues. The “world” only focuses on the material world; food, water, medicine, and climate, to mention a few. Those of the “Kingdom” see spiritual issues as being important. It is my opinion that many of the justice issues of this world are being adopted by the Church, sometimes to the neglect of the priority of spiritual justice. The value and destiny of the soul is the priority of the Kingdom.

The right of every Christian to a Bible is a very important spiritual justice issue. I would argue that it is the right of every child of God to be able to hear and read the words of our Heavenly Father. Would not our Father in heaven want each of His children to have access to His Word?

What about Deuteronomy 8:3? “Man does not live on bread alone, but (man lives) on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” This statement by God, through Moses, is a fact concerning humankind. Humanity may survive without God’s Word, but human beings cannot really live (spiritually) without hearing, and putting into practice God’s Word.

In Matthew 4:4, it is recorded that when Jesus was taken out to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, he quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to Satan in order to resist the temptation to disobey the Father. Jesus continued to use the Word of God against Satan to defeat him. We must do the same. The point is this: how can the Christian use the weapon that God has shown us to use if we do not have access to it? The only logical

answer is that God wants His children to have access to His Word. It would never be God's desire to leave one of His children defenseless.

The Parable of the Sower found in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew shows us that it has always been the desire of Satan to “steal the word,” or to get us “to neglect the word.” It is God's will for a person “to hear the word, understand the word, and bring forth fruit.” Throughout Church History, there has always been a battle over the Word of God. As God's Word goes, so goes the Church. When God's Word, the Bible, is available to people, the Gospel spreads and takes root. When God's Word is scarce, hidden, or unavailable, the Church declines or becomes weakened.

Ephesians 6:17 records, “Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.” Christians without Bibles, are like soldiers without swords. Satan will try to either keep people from getting the Word (persecution, poverty, access problems), or he will try to keep Christians from applying God's Word (neglect, distractions) in their lives. No wonder the Bible Gap is a problem. No wonder he fights against access to Bibles.

The entire fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel deals with Jesus' view of the Bible Gap. For example, John 14:21 records, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.” Jesus declares that the real proof that a person loves Him is that they obey His words. How can a person obey His words, if they do not have access to His words?

Therefore, it should be our task to provide thorough distribution, placement, and engagement of Bibles to all Christians, and to anyone else who wants a Bible. This will enable us to “make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe everything that He has commanded us” (Matthew 28:19-20).

I would argue that if we (the Church) do not provide access to Jesus' words, we cheat new disciples of what is rightfully theirs as children of God. Any hindrance to this task needs to be removed. If not, it is an affront to God's will.

*Does every professing Christian have a right to a Bible?* I believe the answer to that question is yes. I have answered this question in the comments above. Jesus says in the Gospel of John 15:7-10,

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it will be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Three important points need to be made from this section of Scripture. First, the word "abide" used by Jesus means to "remain or continue." How can a person be expected to remain and continue in Jesus's commandments, if they do not have access to a personal Bible? Otherwise, they only hear occasional sermons and teachings, at best. It puts the Christian at a great disadvantage in their walk with God. It is unfair and wrong to do this to a child of God.

Second, it will hinder their prayer life. Jesus asserts there is a relationship between abiding in Him, God's Word abiding in us, and answered prayer. Again, I argue that if we do not provide a personal Bible to each Christian, we are hindering their prayer life and their spiritual life.

Third, if a believer does not have access to a Bible and is unable to have regular engagement with God's Word, we hinder the love of God in their life. Again, this is unfair, unjust, and wrong. It is the right of every believer to have a copy of God's Word in a format they can use in their relationship with the Lord.

When we do not give access to God's Word, we keep God's children weak in their faith. Romans 10:17 instructs us, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." An individual's faith is fed and fueled by regular engagement with the Bible. Also, the Gospel grows and spreads rapidly when God's Word is available to a people. This is confirmed in the history of the Early Church, as seen in Acts. It is also confirmed throughout the centuries of Church history. The answers given in both surveys to the last question confirm this fact in our present day.

*Is Bible poverty related to material poverty?* The answer is yes. It is clear that there is an economic difference between the Global South and the Global North. The weak economic and political structures of the Global South keep the majority of people in the Global South very poor. This was confirmed in the data collected by the surveys. When the average wage is a dollar or two a day, and the cost of a printed Bible is \$4 to \$8, this makes it very difficult for the average person to afford a Bible. The cost for an audio Bible can be as high as \$20. This is why, whenever possible, the Church should provide God's Word, free of charge.

*What can be done about it?* There are efforts by the United Nations, as well as many NGO's, to eradicate poverty. It is a compassionate idea, and a biblical idea, to care for the poor. However, it is not the main thing upon which Jesus told his disciples to focus. When some of the disciples criticized the woman who used the expensive perfume to anoint him for his future death and burial, Jesus said she had done a good thing. He told his disciples that the poor would be with them always, and that they could help them whenever they wanted to (Mark 14:3-9).

When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, both before his death and resurrection and after, he did not instruct them to take food or money with them to feed the poor or to use to eradicate poverty. He told them to preach the Gospel for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus knew that the greatest problem humanity faces is not financial, but spiritual.

After Jesus fed the 5000, the Gospel of John records that crowds of people were looking for Jesus. However, Jesus knew the tendency of humanity to look to fulfill their physical and material needs above the spiritual. “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw the miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures for eternal life which the Son of Man will give you” (John 6:26-27).

Jesus teaches this same principle in Matthew 6:25-34. He sums it up in verse 33 where He exhorts us to “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (material needs) will be given to you as well.” The fact is that when a person gets his relationship with God reconciled, God helps that person with all other matters of provision. God the Father is a good father who loves His children and will provide for all the needs of His children.

In Luke chapter 4, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61, announcing Himself as God’s long-awaited Servant: “It is written, the Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.” The emphasis is to preach the Gospel to the poor, not to feed the poor. Again, I want to emphasize, we are to help the poor. However, in helping the poor, the priority is on preaching the Gospel to the poor so that they can be eternally reconciled to God.



Now, what can be done about the poverty that affects millions of people from having a Bible? Worldwide poverty will probably never be eradicated until God sets up his Kingdom. Poverty is a result of sin, and the “fall of humanity.” However, we can do our best to alleviate the poverty and suffering that so many go through in the Global South. The more important question for this thesis-project is how can we alleviate Bible poverty? We must find a way to fund God’s Word for God’s children.

I think this can be solved by the Church, if God’s people are willing to come together, and work together to solve it. First John 3:17-18 says, “If anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart toward him, how does God’s love abide in him? Dear children, let us not love in words or speech, but with actions and in truth.” The Body of Christ throughout the world has the world’s goods, money and Bibles. If the Church made up of individuals, local churches, missionary organizations, and Bible Societies would come together with cooperative efforts, we could provide God’s Word to all who need and want it.

*Do those who can do something about solving the problem, want to?* This is an important question. Part of the problem is ignorance of the problem. Much good Great Commission ministry is being done throughout the Global South. However, we either miss the problem or ignore the problem. Perhaps the problem looks impossible to solve? One of the purposes of this thesis-project is to bring the problem forward to the Church at large. The second purpose is to start the process of solving it.

We should not judge the hearts of those who are in the position to solve the problem. It could be, that they do not see the problem, or believe there is a problem. It could also be that they do not believe they can solve such a big problem. Surely, as

followers of Christ, if those who have the power to solve this crisis believed there was a crisis, they would want to solve it.

*Who holds the key? Who holds the power to change the situation?* Before we look at the human organizations, we must remind ourselves that God holds the power to change the situation.

Humanly, the most important player in this situation is the United Bible Society. They are comprised of over 140 Bible Societies that work in over 200 countries. They are a collective association of individual Bible societies that come under the umbrella of the United Bible Society based in England. Most national Bible Societies have a Director, with a local board. They hold the majority of Scripture copyrights throughout the world. They decide how many Bibles will be printed each year. They set the price. Individual Christians, local churches, and missionary organizations go to the Bible Society to access Bibles, New Testaments, and portions of Scripture.

However, this problem cannot be set only at the feet of the Bible Societies. The Global Church must take responsibility to solve the Bible Gap. The Church is tasked with the responsibility of making disciples of all people groups. It is the Church's responsibility to provide the Word of God to the world. If we would do so, we would see an explosion of Church growth in the Global South that would amaze us. I believe we would also see an exponential speed of the spread of the Gospel into the 10/40 Window, and into Unreached People Groups that would astound us.

*What changes need to be made in how ministry is done and how the business of ministry is conducted?* The surveys reveal a perception from the national churches that the Bible Societies have a profit motive as their first priority for how they do business.

For example, in many countries of Africa, the cost of a Bible can be as high as \$6-\$8 per Bible. For a poor African, this is prohibitive. The Bible Society has a different view. They believe they have to charge these costs in order to sustain their ministry of not only printing Scripture, but also doing new translations. Their primary way of sustaining their ministry is by selling Scriptures, not by receiving donations.

Another important party to this discussion are Western Missionary Organizations. These ministries are conducting evangelism, discipleship, and Church Planting throughout the Global South. When they need Bibles, New Testament, and Scripture Portions, they also must go to the Bible Societies to purchase Scripture. If their ministry is growing, they often want to purchase large quantities. They may be willing to purchase 50,000 copies, but often they are told by the Bible Societies that they will only be able to purchase 10,000. When they inquire why, they are told that such a large quantity would flood the market and therefore reduce the demand from the Bible Society in the future, thus harming the ability of the Bible Society to sustain itself.

The fact is, the more the Church conducts evangelism, discipleship, and church planting, it grows. When the Church grows, the demand for Scripture grows. Therefore, the demand for Scripture will actually increase from year to year for the Bible Society. This should be a win-win situation for everyone.

The key stakeholders need to come together and talk about solving this problem. God desires that we put his Kingdom and His righteousness first. When we do this, He will take care of the needs of all parties (Matthew 6:33). This command and promise from Jesus is about material resources. This is one of the central issues of the Bible Gap problem.

*Can we ever solve the problem and should we try?* Yes, we can solve the problem. The Scripture is available to be printed in the majority of languages. There are plenty of Great Commission ministries who will distribute, place, and engage people in the Global South with a copy of God's Word. As for finances, Christians' annual income is \$12.3 trillion. \$213 billion is given to Christian causes. \$11.4 billion is given to foreign missions.<sup>9</sup>

Yes, we should try. We need to communicate, collaborate, and focus on the problem with faith, prayer, and unity. If we have the will, God will provide the way. Finally, I wish to comment further on the data extracted from the *World Christian Database*. I first want to express my respect and appreciation to those who compile this data. It is updated on almost a daily basis. It is done with the utmost intent of integrity to be as accurate as is humanly possible. However, only God knows exactly how many Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions are in circulation. Thus, we have to understand that these are our best estimates. Having said that, these are the best statistics available to work with.

At first glance at the bottom line totals for the Global South, it seems we are doing pretty well with distribution. It looks like the Church has provided more Bibles, and more New Testaments than the number of literate Christian adults. However, when we analyze deeper, it is not so good.

First, we should pull the statistics from Brazil out. Why? They skew a clear picture of the Bible Gap in the Global South. Brazil is different than any other country in the Global South related to Scripture distribution and access. Brazil has now exceeded the

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<sup>9</sup> "About Missions," accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.aboutmissions.org/statistics.html>.

United States in the distribution of Bibles, New Testaments, and Portions. They are the global leader in Scripture distribution. In fact, they have distributed three times more Bibles and New Testaments than literate Christian adults in their country. So, these numbers distort the picture of the overall Global South situation.

Why is Brazil's situation different from any other Global South country? What have the Christians done to solve this Bible Gap problem?<sup>10</sup>

When you extract these out, you get a different picture in the Global South. Here it is.<sup>11</sup>

Christians-	1,371,500,000
Literate Households-	224,849,000
Bibles in Place-	521,162,000
Literate Christian Adults-	732,025,000
New Testaments in Place-	540,031,000

A second concern I have with how to interpret these statistics is related to the assumption given to the life-span of the books. In the Hakone Formula, of which the Scripture data in the World Christian Database is based, they assume that a Bible and a New Testament has an average life-span of twenty years. They also assume that the average life-span of a Portion, such as a Gospel of John lasts ten years.

These average life spans may hold up in the United States, Western Europe, or Australia? However, this assumed life-span may not even be accurate for Christians in the West. Personally, I do not believe I have ever had even a beautiful leather-bound

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<sup>10</sup> Further study should be done on Brazil.

<sup>11</sup> World Christian Database at The Center for the Study of Global Christianity

Bible that I use every day hold together for twenty years. The stitching and glue seem to always give out.

The Christians of the Global South do not live in air-conditioned houses or drive air-conditioned automobiles to church. They most often live in hot, humid homes. They often walk to church. They may take a moped or car. Their Bibles are subject to rain, mud, and humidity. They are also most often only able to access a hardbound or paper copy of Scripture. These do not possess high quality glue and stitching. They are of very common or low-quality workmanship. The Bibles I have seen in my travels to the Global South are often “dog-eared” and ragged from use and not very old.

I believe a more reasonable life-span would be no more than ten years for a Bible or New Testament in the Global South. Even that may be too generous. Yet, let’s apply that life-span to the Global South while removing Brazil from the calculation. Here is how the picture looks now:

Christians-	1,371,500,000
Literate Households-	224,849,000
Bibles in Place-	260,581,000
Literate Christian Adults-	732,025,000
New Testaments in Place-	270,015,000

Now we see a more realistic picture of the Scripture need in the Global South. There is a gap of almost 500 million between the number of Bibles in place and the number of literate Christians. Why should every literate Christian in the Global North

have a Bible? Yet, hundreds of millions in the Global South have to go without? Surely, God would want to meet the need of all His children. Would He not want to do this for those in the Global South?

This same disparity is also revealed from the country surveys discussed in the previous chapter. What if a life-span for a Bible or New Testament is shorter than ten years? It very well could be in the Global South. What if it is seven years? The Bible Gap in the Global South becomes even more bleak.

There is a third concern that also should be considered. Since these statistics only account for literate adults, age 15 or older, what about the children? We must not forget the children. Children are often the most educated in Global South countries. More and more are going to school. It is not uncommon for a ten-year-old to be the only reader in the family. There are hundreds of millions of these as well who would benefit from a copy of the Bible, or at least a New Testament.

In fact, I could write multiple stories of where a child comes home from a Bible Club and reads the Bible to their parents and grandparents. The results are often that salvation enters the household through the child. At the least, a literate child can bring the Word of God to illiterate parents or grandparents. This happens all the time in the Global South. So, in consideration of these additional factors, the Bible Gap is worse than previously thought.

Finally, what about non-literate adult Christians? What about the deaf and the blind? Do they not have a right to have God's Word in a way they can understand?

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

This thesis-project represents a first step in identifying a Bible Gap in the Global South. Much work remains in addressing this problem and offering solutions to solve it. To take this issue further, it would be wonderful to do research on each separate country in the Global South. Each country has unique problems and solutions.

It would take a team of people, and probably five years or more, to do this. I believe it would be a worthy research project for an organization such as The Pew Research Center or another organization of similar focus, to fund.

The benefits of further research, and actions to solve the problem, have great potential for Kingdom expansion. The more that is discovered, the more the problem will come to the focus of the Church, and the missionary organizations that serve it.

It would be beneficial if this problem could come to the attention of such Mission organizations as Lausanne, Nexus, and the Forum of Bible Agencies. The key is for people to start talking about it.

I did not focus much in this thesis-project on digital or audio formats. I also did not give attention to oral Scripture, commonly called orality. They all hold promise. God is using them around the world. However, sometimes, I think those who focus on these formats try to promote them as *the* answer to all Bible Gap problems. They definitely are a part of the answer. They do hold great promise for the future. These formats could each be a separate thesis-project related to the Bible Gap in the Global South.

For this project, I chose to focus on the printed Word. It is still preferred by 90 percent of Christians in the Global South. In fact, I have met many Global South Christians that use both printed and digital Scripture. When it comes to study and



engagement with Scripture, most prefer a Bible, the physical book that contains the Word of God that can be touched, held, written upon, and read.

When Jesus faced the devil in the Temptation, he did not say to him, “It is heard,” or, “It is said.” He declared, “It is written.” The written Word of God is the foundation from which all other formats of Scripture are based.<sup>12</sup>

### **Final Thoughts**

“The Bible is alive. It has hands and it grabs hold of me, it has feet and runs after me”.<sup>13</sup>

This was spoken by Martin Luther 500 years ago. Yet, it still rings true today. The Bible is foundational to the *missio Dei*, to God’s work in the world.

Rapid growth of Christianity has taken place, especially the past one hundred years. It has spread from the Global North to the Global South so that the center of Christianity is no longer in Europe or America, but in the Global South, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In an era when Christianity has become a multicultural movement across every continent, what unites its people is the Bible, the book of life.<sup>14</sup>

The Bible is the manifesto of God’s mission to the world. It also contains the mandate to go into all the world in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the Church has found the Bible to be a key resource in fulfilling both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

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<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 32:16.

<sup>13</sup> Pauline Hoggarth, Fergus Macdonald, Bill Mitchell, and Knud Jorgensen, *Bible in Mission* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2013), Foreword.

<sup>14</sup> Hoggarth et al, *Bible in Mission*, x.

Since the Reformation, the Bible and evangelism have gone hand in hand.<sup>15</sup> More recently, the history of Bible translation and distribution over the past two centuries provides evidence of the close link between the availability of Scriptures and the growth of the Church. There is first a Bible, then a convert, then a church.<sup>16</sup> Researchers of World Christianity have identified a correlation between the growth in Scripture translation and publication, with the multiplication of the Church in numerous regions of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Renowned African scholar, Lamin Sanneh has written extensively about this subject. He contends that vernacular translation and distribution of Scripture in Africa changed the course of African history.<sup>18</sup> Translated Scriptures enabled the receptor cultures to embrace the Bible as their own, and not as a Western import.<sup>19</sup> God's Word, the Bible, is truly incarnational because it is spirit and life.

William Cameron Townsend once said, "The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother-tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner."<sup>20</sup>

There is a link between the Bible, the Church, and God's Mission. There is a link between the health of the Church, and how directly the Church is connecting to Scripture. This is as true in the Global North as the Global South. Yet, there is a famine of the Word

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<sup>15</sup> Stephen Neill, *History of Christian Missions* (Hammondsworth, NY: Penguin, 1986), 229.

<sup>16</sup> A.M. Chirgwin, *The Bible in World Evangelism* (London, UK: SCM, 1954), 76.

<sup>17</sup> Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 298.

<sup>18</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 97.

<sup>19</sup> Sanneh, *Whose Religion*, 109.

<sup>20</sup> *Bible in Mission*, 199.

of God in the Global South. There are yet hundreds of millions of believers located here that want a Bible for their spiritual nourishment, but cannot access one.

The problem may be poverty or persecution. It may be the cost or supply. God certainly does not want to keep His spiritual food from His children. It is not God's fault. It is ours. It is our responsibility to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is time for those who have the Word, and those who have the resources for that Word to come together, and get the job done!

## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY 1

1. Does every Christian in your country own a Bible?
2. If not, why?
3. What are the reasons and/or problems for the above answers?
4. Are there people groups or language groups in your country that do not have access to the New Testament or the whole Bible?
5. If so, which ones?
6. Can these people groups read another language? If so, is this sufficient?
7. Are there non-Christians in your country who want a Bible, but cannot get one?
8. If so, why can they not access one?
9. Is there a shortage of accessible, affordable Bibles in your country?
10. If God's Word was more available, do you think this would have an effect upon the growth of Christianity in your country?

## APPENDIX B

### SURVEY 2

1. What percentage of Christians in your country/countries own a Bible? Please list country and estimated Percentage.
2. Could you rank-order the top reasons for not owning a Bible?
3. What are the reasons and/or problems for the above answers?
4. Are there language groups in your country that do not have access to the New Testament or the whole Bible?
5. If so, which ones?
6. Can these people read another language? Is this sufficient?
7. Are there non-Christians in your country who want a Bible, but cannot access one?
8. If so, what are the reasons for them to not be able to access one?
9. What percentage of Christians in your country use either audio or digital formats of the Bible? Please list estimated percentage for each format.
10. If Scripture was more available, do you think this would have an effect upon the growth of Christianity in your country/countries? In what ways?

## APPENDIX C

### THE GLOBAL SOUTH

#### Scripture Goals' and 'Scriptures in Place' in selected countries of the Global South

Data derived from : Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed July 2017)

Country	Population	Christians	Literate Christian Households (= Bible goal)	Bibles distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate Christian adults (= NT Goal)	New Testaments distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate non-Christians (= Portions goal)	Portions distributed last 10 yrs (= in place)
Afghanistan	32,527,000	7,600	370	2,600	1,300	5,100	5,769,000	7,100
Algeria	39,667,000	69,100	7,300	48,000	35,800	159,000	20,544,000	134,000
American Samoa	55,500	54,400	7,500	25,100	33,100	6,600	1,400	2,900
Angola	25,022,000	23,223,000	3,229,000	1,244,000	8,114,000	308,000	1,134,000	343,000
Anguilla	14,600	13,200	2,800	1,500	8,700	640	1,600	340
Antigua & Barbuda	91,800	85,200	20,900	9,500	55,600	3,700	13,400	2,000
Argentina	43,417,000	39,183,000	11,938,000	15,578,000	28,578,000	15,666,000	3,218,000	6,822,000
Armenia	3,018,000	2,849,000	603,000	848,000	2,313,000	16,061,000	140,000	798,000
Aruba	104,000	100,000	25,300	79,400	74,300	610	8,000	41,400
Azerbaijan	9,754,000	311,000	64,400	39,200	241,000	111,000	7,359,000	350,000
Bahamas	388,000	361,000	82,500	561,000	248,000	30,100	43,500	32,400
Bahrain	1,377,000	182,000	26,500	379,000	135,000	72,100	888,000	15,100
Bangladesh	160,996,000	859,000	95,000	417,000	355,000	2,046,000	66,434,000	6,629,000
Barbados	284,000	270,000	56,200	29,600	168,000	13,100	61,500	5,800
Belize	359,000	328,000	59,600	188,000	197,000	11,400	28,400	25,000
Benin	10,880,000	4,818,000	256,000	882,000	798,000	123,000	1,008,000	226,000
Bhutan	775,000	17,200	1,700	4,600	6,700	4,400	293,000	4,500
Bolivia	10,725,000	9,952,000	2,468,000	4,184,000	6,334,000	9,533,000	512,000	11,311,000
Botswana	2,262,000	1,585,000	185,000	327,000	717,000	33,500	617,000	174,000
Brazil	207,848,000	188,658,000	40,968,000	411,978,000	132,442,000	464,615,000	13,625,000	131,116,000
British Virgin Islands	30,100	24,600	4,800	5,100	14,600	1,900	6,800	630
Brunei	423,000	49,700	8,000	55,700	35,500	5,300	275,000	34,100
Burkina Faso	18,106,000	4,223,000	195,000	667,000	659,000	78,400	2,170,000	103,000
Burundi	11,179,000	10,438,000	1,775,000	1,102,000	4,506,000	391,000	856,000	277,000
Cambodia	15,578,000	398,000	52,500	331,000	201,000	199,000	7,673,000	409,000
Cameroon	23,344,000	13,781,000	1,697,000	1,198,000	5,073,000	105,000	4,484,000	129,000
Cape Verde	521,000	494,000	82,600	95,100	296,000	4,400	15,900	14,700
Caribbean Netherlands	24,900	23,400	5,700	20,600	17,100	110	2,400	9,800
Cayman Islands	60,000	48,500	9,000	22,400	27,500	1,300	15,200	3,000
Central African Republic	4,900,000	3,578,000	236,000	232,000	677,000	52,300	422,000	21,400
Chad	14,037,000	4,939,000	408,000	256,000	833,000	49,000	1,904,000	37,500
Chile	17,948,000	15,836,000	3,753,000	6,375,000	12,289,000	843,000	1,843,000	9,479,000
China	1,376,049,000	123,053,000	28,539,000	74,374,000	96,847,000	6,083,000	986,279,000	7,615,000
Colombia	48,229,000	46,004,000	7,874,000	24,309,000	32,194,000	6,531,000	1,984,000	17,530,000
Comoros	788,000	4,000	530	650	1,800	170	356,000	850
Congo	4,620,000	4,127,000	603,000	2,513,000	1,626,000	130,000	476,000	31,900
Congo DR	77,267,000	73,384,000	7,322,000	2,921,000	23,725,000	172,000	1,813,000	288,000
Cook Islands	20,800	20,100	3,500	10,700	11,000	2,900	1,000	510
Costa Rica	4,808,000	4,599,000	1,062,000	4,348,000	3,465,000	475,000	173,000	848,000
Cote d'Ivoire	22,702,000	7,920,000	580,000	1,817,000	1,803,000	58,200	3,552,000	196,000
Cuba	11,390,000	6,908,000	1,819,000	2,903,000	5,634,000	3,856,000	3,879,000	9,036,000
Curacao	157,000	147,000	35,500	183,000	106,000	1,300	17,100	78,000
Djibouti	888,000	11,100	1,300	1,700	4,800	92	395,000	92
Dominica	72,700	68,600	14,900	9,100	50,100	3,400	3,200	1,900
Dominican Republic	10,528,000	9,992,000	1,771,000	3,129,000	6,327,000	999,000	376,000	3,014,000
Ecuador	16,144,000	15,407,000	3,497,000	5,473,000	10,176,000	716,000	515,000	2,098,000
Egypt	91,508,000	7,673,000	1,156,000	4,276,000	3,786,000	5,330,000	41,414,000	7,194,000
El Salvador	6,127,000	5,902,000	1,025,000	4,795,000	3,667,000	1,296,000	156,000	4,259,000
Equatorial Guinea	845,000	746,000	155,000	73,000	422,000	6,800	62,700	7,800
Eritrea	5,228,000	2,433,000	429,000	326,000	981,000	202,000	1,128,000	17,900
Ethiopia	99,391,000	58,574,000	5,069,000	4,902,000	13,357,000	274,000	9,342,000	297,000
Falkland Islands	2,900	2,400	620	290	1,500	670	810	150
Fiji	892,000	570,000	87,500	241,000	374,000	69,500	217,000	14,800
French Guiana	269,000	226,000	55,100	64,800	124,000	16,100	23,500	66,400
French Polynesia	283,000	265,000	55,000	106,000	201,000	28,200	18,900	6,300
Gabon	1,725,000	1,461,000	287,000	385,000	723,000	23,100	170,000	29,500
Gambia	1,991,000	91,200	5,500	35,900	24,600	1,300	533,000	1,800
Georgia	4,000,000	3,453,000	839,000	52,700	2,845,000	50,100	452,000	29,800
Ghana	27,410,000	17,626,000	2,387,000	9,917,000	7,157,000	364,000	4,834,000	609,000
Grenada	107,000	103,000	23,500	18,000	64,000	6,600	2,700	3,200
Guadeloupe	468,000	449,000	119,000	236,000	315,000	142,000	14,400	153,000
Guam	170,000	160,000	39,200	57,200	117,000	23,500	9,700	4,100
Guatemala	16,343,000	15,910,000	2,203,000	15,259,000	7,538,000	754,000	572,000	3,162,000
Guinea	12,609,000	444,000	21,900	147,000	59,000	11,400	1,774,000	55,500

Country	Population	Christians	Literate Christian Households (= Bible goal)	Bibles distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate Christian adults (= NT Goal)	New Testaments distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate non-Christians (= Portions goal)	Portions distributed last 10 yrs (= in place)
Guinea-Bissau	1,844,000	236,000	32,500	42,100	78,800	2,200	540,000	6,000
Guyana	767,000	414,000	68,500	142,000	249,000	38,900	216,000	151,000
Haiti	10,711,000	10,096,000	1,084,000	2,943,000	3,159,000	1,050,000	297,000	1,666,000
Honduras	8,075,000	7,733,000	1,118,000	3,784,000	4,347,000	1,838,000	359,000	2,019,000
India	1,311,051,000	61,711,000	6,903,000	49,910,000	27,530,000	100,975,000	558,786,000	115,701,000
Indonesia	257,564,000	31,045,000	6,308,000	29,460,000	20,525,000	26,692,000	152,304,000	3,125,000
Iran	79,109,000	296,000	45,500	93,400	177,000	145,000	50,767,000	1,196,000
Iraq	36,423,000	336,000	28,400	287,000	149,000	682,000	16,833,000	1,153,000
Jamaica	2,793,000	2,362,000	236,000	699,000	757,000	45,500	1,110,000	125,000
Jordan	7,595,000	127,000	20,400	448,000	79,100	216,000	4,715,000	173,000
Kazakhstan	17,625,000	4,591,000	1,130,000	215,000	3,312,000	96,800	9,565,000	213,000
Kenya	46,050,000	37,275,000	4,243,000	10,642,000	15,283,000	286,000	4,031,000	574,000
Kiribati	112,000	109,000	14,800	41,600	63,600	11,400	2,200	2,500
Kuwait	3,892,000	396,000	50,600	167,000	291,000	80,800	2,596,000	34,800
Kyrgyzstan	5,940,000	324,000	72,600	31,900	209,000	17,600	3,833,000	37,900
Laos	6,802,000	222,000	26,900	148,000	105,000	127,000	3,120,000	69,100
Lebanon	5,851,000	2,004,000	338,000	1,581,000	1,360,000	5,144,000	2,624,000	2,040,000
Lesotho	2,135,000	1,967,000	257,000	262,000	789,000	22,000	245,000	138,000
Liberia	4,503,000	1,857,000	125,000	748,000	361,000	171,000	754,000	179,000
Libya	6,278,000	46,600	7,400	748,000	27,900	9,817,000	3,933,000	8,355,000
Madagascar	24,235,000	14,079,000	1,891,000	1,450,000	5,181,000	276,000	3,931,000	1,070,000
Malawi	17,215,000	13,735,000	1,818,000	2,226,000	4,288,000	548,000	1,499,000	682,000
Malaysia	30,331,000	2,692,000	504,000	1,330,000	1,864,000	194,000	19,454,000	636,000
Maldives	364,000	1,600	210	930	1,100	780	258,000	960
Mali	17,600,000	386,000	23,000	202,000	67,700	28,300	3,035,000	46,000
Marshall Islands	53,000	50,400	5,200	18,000	33,700	6,700	2,300	1,400
Martinique	396,000	382,000	109,000	204,000	299,000	104,000	19,700	118,000
Mauritania	4,068,000	10,000	880	4,700	2,600	50,500	1,107,000	45,300
Mauritius	1,273,000	422,000	70,700	111,000	302,000	26,300	614,000	555,000
Mayotte	240,000	1,400	240	280	670	72	120,000	500
Mexico	127,017,000	121,811,000	22,250,000	25,620,000	82,151,000	12,824,000	4,469,000	39,173,000
Micronesia	104,000	98,900	12,700	37,000	58,600	13,800	4,800	2,800
Mongolia	2,959,000	53,500	10,900	63,200	37,500	11,000	2,050,000	57,300
Montserrat	5,100	4,700	950	700	3,000	270	310	150
Morocco	34,378,000	34,800	3,800	140,000	16,200	171,000	16,772,000	49,300
Mozambique	27,978,000	14,818,000	1,584,000	679,000	3,813,000	470,000	3,930,000	607,000
Myanmar	53,897,000	4,270,000	756,000	635,000	2,848,000	1,087,000	33,311,000	363,000
Namibia	2,459,000	2,232,000	317,000	772,000	963,000	35,200	228,000	142,000
Nauru	10,200	7,700	910	3,800	5,400	910	2,100	200
Nepal	28,514,000	1,077,000	112,000	840,000	416,000	3,913,000	10,605,000	1,239,000
New Caledonia	263,000	224,000	47,300	95,800	151,000	23,200	45,600	4,900
Nicaragua	6,082,000	5,781,000	649,000	1,766,000	3,135,000	711,000	184,000	2,083,000
Niger	19,899,000	66,600	1,600	55,000	5,100	9,300	1,523,000	11,600
Nigeria	182,202,000	84,133,000	8,583,000	30,297,000	24,036,000	393,000	28,113,000	2,822,000
Niue	1,600	1,600	280	660	890	180	80	41
North Korea	25,155,000	203,000	42,300	481,000	160,000	525,000	19,671,000	65,200
Northern Mariana Is	55,100	44,700	9,600	20,700	32,800	6,100	7,800	1,600
Oman	4,491,000	197,000	45,300	68,300	133,000	21,400	2,968,000	89,400
Pakistan	188,925,000	3,850,000	332,000	9,883,000	1,361,000	1,479,000	65,801,000	2,144,000
Palau	21,300	19,600	3,200	10,500	14,100	2,700	1,700	500
Palestine	4,668,000	50,300	7,800	1,171,000	28,100	589,000	2,648,000	91,500
Panama	3,929,000	3,544,000	730,000	1,378,000	2,339,000	483,000	354,000	527,000
Papua New Guinea	7,619,000	7,223,000	842,000	904,000	2,436,000	272,000	577,000	3,115,000
Paraguay	6,639,000	6,337,000	1,238,000	1,455,000	4,065,000	578,000	290,000	8,445,000
Peru	31,377,000	30,263,000	5,535,000	11,479,000	20,354,000	3,861,000	867,000	12,027,000
Philippines	100,699,000	91,257,000	14,950,000	62,425,000	57,991,000	263,437,000	7,384,000	136,765,000
Puerto Rico	3,683,000	3,528,000	894,000	1,707,000	2,611,000	991,000	198,000	1,724,000
Qatar	2,235,000	210,000	30,400	66,800	165,000	36,600	1,662,000	15,900
Reunion	861,000	754,000	173,000	210,000	502,000	62,800	76,500	1,162,000
Rwanda	11,610,000	10,624,000	1,370,000	1,984,000	3,794,000	105,000	716,000	541,000
Saint Helena	4,000	3,800	1,100	2,300	2,700	160	510	170
Saint Kitts & Nevis	55,600	52,600	11,400	6,500	35,700	2,800	3,400	1,400
Saint Lucia	185,000	177,000	38,800	28,600	119,000	9,200	8,500	4,700
Saint Vincent	109,000	97,000	18,100	10,500	54,700	4,100	24,600	2,200
Samoa	193,000	191,000	24,100	83,300	118,000	22,600	2,000	4,900
Sao Tome & Principe	190,000	183,000	30,900	23,300	71,000	2,200	4,900	2,400
Saudi Arabia	31,540,000	1,379,000	194,000	255,000	916,000	671,000	20,348,000	144,000

Country	Population	Christians (= Bible goal)	Literate Christian Households (= Bible goal)	Bibles distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate Christian adults (= NT Goal)	New Testaments distributed last 20 yrs (= in place)	Literate non-Christians (= Portions goal)	Portions distributed last 10 yrs (= in place)
Senegal	15,129,000	778,000	45,900	124,000	227,000	32,200	4,205,000	218,000
Seychelles	96,500	91,300	16,800	28,800	61,600	18,400	6,200	110,000
Sierra Leone	6,453,000	796,000	73,700	474,000	200,000	417,000	1,455,000	339,000
Sint Maarten	38,700	34,600	8,200	18,300	24,400	71	6,000	10,600
Solomon Islands	584,000	556,000	71,900	215,000	244,000	55,100	24,600	12,100
Somalia	10,787,000	3,200	150	1,400	400	38	1,437,000	82
South Africa	54,490,000	44,690,000	7,951,000	19,408,000	25,882,000	1,926,000	10,247,000	1,800,000
South Sudan	12,340,000	7,462,000	854,000	642,000	2,622,000	887,000	1,737,000	579,000
Sri Lanka	20,715,000	1,842,000	321,000	1,361,000	1,260,000	1,631,000	12,989,000	1,864,000
Sudan	40,235,000	2,016,000	274,000	192,000	865,000	311,000	16,706,000	214,000
Suriname	543,000	277,000	63,600	78,700	182,000	22,200	195,000	88,100
Swaziland	1,287,000	1,137,000	118,000	346,000	423,000	14,800	247,000	82,800
Syria	18,502,000	1,136,000	155,000	283,000	605,000	1,497,000	9,295,000	2,448,000
Tajikistan	8,482,000	63,600	10,300	18,200	40,900	38,500	5,470,000	70,700
Tanzania	53,470,000	29,584,000	3,745,000	5,897,000	10,466,000	574,000	9,401,000	540,000
Thailand	67,959,000	866,000	153,000	1,405,000	667,000	1,338,000	53,243,000	12,103,000
Timor-Leste	1,185,000	1,040,000	151,000	2,035,000	349,000	1,747,000	48,900	245,000
Togo	7,305,000	3,495,000	333,000	1,065,000	1,076,000	76,700	1,472,000	45,900
Tokelau Islands	1,300	1,200	220	690	700	140	73	31
Tonga	106,000	102,000	16,500	50,900	63,600	12,200	3,200	2,600
Trinidad & Tobago	1,360,000	862,000	200,000	126,000	649,000	43,800	416,000	24,000
Tunisia	11,254,000	24,000	3,700	18,800	14,400	169,000	6,860,000	151,000
Turkmenistan	5,374,000	71,700	12,200	11,000	49,200	15,900	3,792,000	1,800
Turks & Caicos Is	34,300	31,400	7,600	19,600	17,700	1,000	7,200	2,900
Tuvalu	9,900	9,400	1,400	5,400	5,400	1,300	460	270
Uganda	39,032,000	32,958,000	4,933,000	3,766,000	12,292,000	474,000	2,539,000	1,311,000
Ukraine	44,824,000	38,509,000	11,995,000	8,134,000	32,654,000	4,375,000	5,364,000	6,908,000
United Arab Emirates	9,157,000	1,173,000	152,000	393,000	887,000	128,000	6,206,000	107,000
United States Virgin Is	106,000	100,000	26,300	56,000	65,000	22,300	15,400	10,200
Uruguay	3,432,000	2,185,000	649,000	640,000	1,683,000	976,000	970,000	2,962,000
Uzbekistan	29,893,000	357,000	64,000	92,400	252,000	62,400	21,009,000	89,900
Vanuatu	265,000	247,000	38,600	97,200	125,000	26,200	15,100	5,600
Venezuela	31,108,000	28,813,000	5,147,000	7,263,000	19,614,000	3,013,000	1,745,000	5,336,000
Viet Nam	93,448,000	7,997,000	1,555,000	2,570,000	5,739,000	4,413,000	61,460,000	949,000
Wallis & Futuna Islands	13,200	12,800	2,400	9,600	7,600	2,200	220	440
Western Sahara	573,000	880	18	3,400	66	4,500	42,500	840
Yemen	26,832,000	36,500	4,000	32,100	13,300	8,400	10,630,000	5,600
Zambia	16,212,000	13,858,000	1,833,000	1,614,000	4,362,000	392,000	1,021,000	1,082,000
Zimbabwe	15,603,000	12,740,000	2,045,000	1,977,000	5,732,000	241,000	1,886,000	1,798,000
<b>Global South (selection)</b>	<b>5,967,895,000</b>	<b>1,560,158,000</b>	<b>265,817,000</b>	<b>933,140,000</b>	<b>864,467,000</b>	<b>1,004,646,000</b>	<b>2,525,609,000</b>	<b>620,268,000</b>
Percentage of goals met if books last 20 years and Portions 10 years:				351%		116%		25%
or, Scriptures per family household or per person:				3.5 Bibles/family		1.2 per person		0.2
Percentage of goals met if books last 5 years and Portions 2.5 years:				88%		29%		6%
or, Scriptures per family household or per person:				0.9 Bibles/family		0.3 per person		0.1
<b>Global total</b>	<b>7,349,472,000</b>	<b>2,411,984,000</b>	<b>540,310,000</b>	<b>1,690,945,000</b>	<b>1,511,933,000</b>	<b>2,145,065,000</b>	<b>3,018,304,000</b>	<b>1,038,592,000</b>
Percentage of goals met if books last 20 years and Portions 10 years:				313%		142%		34%



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